

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Ethel Lobman: 55 years of
unbroken communist activity

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Stop farm foreclosures! Gov't flood relief now!

Hurricane Floyd has brought disaster in its wake for tens of thousands of working people from North Carolina to New Jersey. Toilers in Central America are also being hit by days of heavy rain. Throughout the affected areas those who work directly on the land or depend on its produce for employment and sustenance are being pounded by this catastrophe.

At least 50 people have died, and 20,000 have been driven from their homes, in the worst-hit state, North Carolina. One government official predicts that as many as 15 percent of farmers in the state could lose their farms. The government has declared the eastern two-thirds of North Carolina to be a disaster zone, along with parts of Virginia, New Jersey, and New York. Capitalist relations shape the differential impact of the floods. Faced with such natural calamities, the banks and agricultural corporations that hold working farmers in debt-bondage respond by tight-

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EDITORIAL

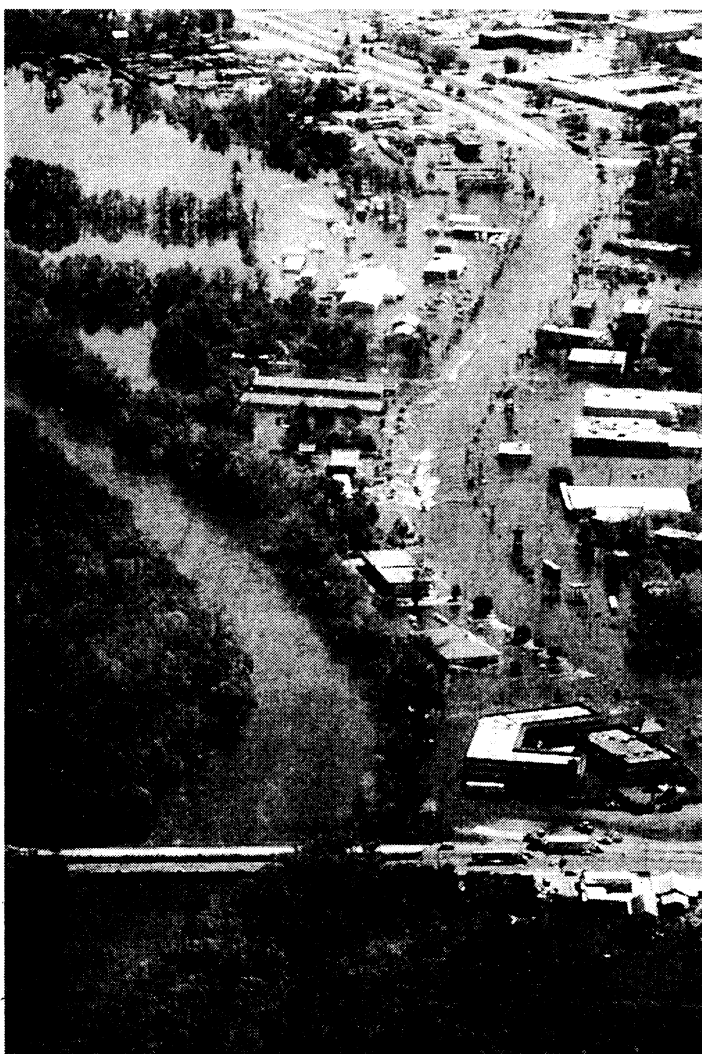
Farmers, farm workers are the hardest hit in North Carolina deluge

BY STU SINGER

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Flooding from Hurricane Floyd took 48 lives, with six others presumed dead, and drove 20,000 people from their homes in eastern North Carolina. There have been hundreds of millions of dollars in damages to crops and livestock alone, and a long-term environmental calamity has been created as fuel, manure, dead animals, and toxic chemicals contaminate water and soil.

Crops of cotton, tobacco, soybeans, sweet potatoes, and peanuts were flooded. State officials estimate half the cotton crop was lost,

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Kinston, North Carolina, under water from flooding. Eastern two-thirds of the state were declared a disaster area. Up to 15 percent of the state's farmers may lose their farms as a result.

Thousands in Puerto Rico demand: 'U.S. Navy out, free the prisoners!'

BY ERNIE MAILHOT
AND ROMINA GREEN

LA RES, Puerto Rico — Thousands of people packed into the Plaza of Revolution here for the 131st anniversary of the *Grito de Lares* (Battle Cry of Lares). The fight for the U.S. Navy to leave the Puerto Rican island of Vieques was one of the cen-

tral themes of the September 23 rally. Participants also celebrated the recent release of 11 Puerto Rican political prisoners and demanded freedom for those still held in U.S. jails. The Grito de Lares commemoration is held every September 23 in support of Puerto Rico's independence. On that date in 1868 coordinated revolts were planned

in Spain's last two colonies in the Americas, Puerto Rico and Cuba. The revolutionaries on both islands called for the abolition of slavery and for independence.

The republic of Puerto Rico was proclaimed that day from the City Hall of Lares. A rebel army of 400 soldiers, including

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Imperialist troops extend control in East Timor

BY RON POULSEN
AND JOANNE KUNIAANSKY

SYDNEY, Australia — As the multinational force led by Australian imperialism extends its military occupation of East Timor, Jakarta has rapidly withdrawn the bulk of the Indonesian army and police from the territory.

Meanwhile, a renewed eruption of student-led protests against the military's role in politics has rocked Jakarta and other Indonesian cities.

The first troops in the International Force for East Timor (Interfet) mandated by the UN Security Council landed in East Timor September 20.

A week later there were 3,700 foreign troops occupying Dili and Bacau, dominated by more than 2,500 from Australia. A fleet of warships stands offshore, with eight from the Australian navy, and one each from the United Kingdom and New Zealand. The Interfet occupation force is set to reach 7,500 troops.

Dubbed "Operation Stabilise," some troops from other imperialist powers, including New Zealand, France, Italy, Britain, and the United States have reinforced Interfet. More slowly, forces promised from semi-colonial countries in Asia are also being sent. After the first week, apart from the British Gurkhas, the only Asian soldiers on the ground were from the Philippines.

The United States has so far committed about 250 troops in logistics and intelligence, mostly stationed in Darwin in northern Australia, with an advance reconnaissance

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Cubans at United Nations say: end the U.S. economic war

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

UNITED NATIONS — Far from easing, Washington's economic war against Cuba "has continued to intensify over the past 40 years," declared Cuba's new foreign minister, Felipe Pérez Roque, addressing the United Nations General Assembly September 24.

The Cuban leader introduced a resolution, to be voted on in the coming weeks, expressing opposition to the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba.

For seven consecutive years, Pérez Roque noted, the General Assembly has adopted similar resolutions, each year by a wider margin.

In 1992 the vote on the resolution was 59 in favor, 71 abstentions, and 3 opposed. Last year it was 157 for, 12 abstentions, and only 2 against — Washington and the Israeli regime.

Pérez Roque began his address by highlighting the growing disparities in the capitalist world today, in which the most industrialized nations, "with only 20 percent of the world's population control 86 percent of its gross domestic product, 82 percent of world export markets, 68 percent of direct foreign

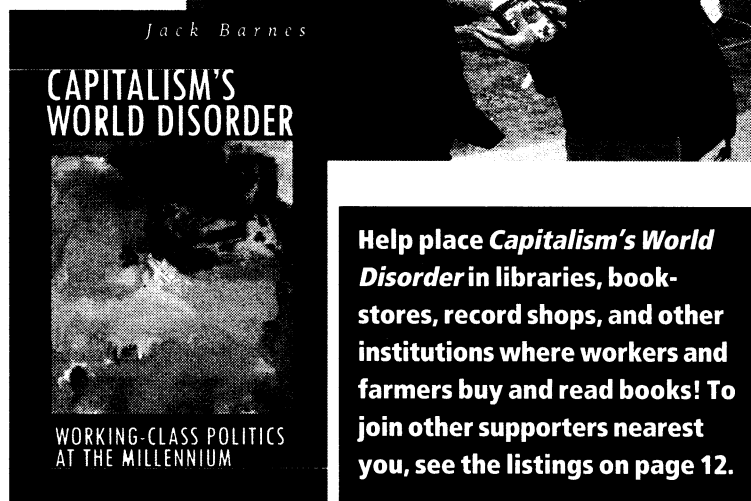
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\$20 SPECIAL OFFER!

**CAPITALISM'S WORLD DISORDER:
WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM**

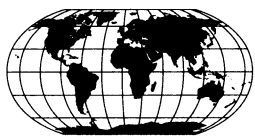
JACK BARNES

"It is often said that great historical crises are only resolved in struggle; that's true. But what is not said as often is that the odds — the probability of victory or of loss — are determined long before these class battles themselves break out. The odds depend on the self-confidence, political clarity, and previous combat experience of the cadres of disciplined proletarian organizations who are already among the fighters in the labor movement, and who know that what they do *beforehand* will be decisive when the working class moves toward revolutionary action."



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No to Moscow's war on Chechnya! — page 14



Taipei rejects aid from China

The Taiwanese government in Taipei turned down an offer of rescue teams and supplies from the government of China. Beijing offered the assistance September 23, two days after a massive quake claimed nearly 2,000 lives, reshaped Taiwan's landscape, and felled whole buildings in the capital, Taipei. An offer of a financial grant may yet be accepted. Beijing offered doctors, seismologists, and other qualified workers. "It's not clear to me if they would be useful or not," said a spokesperson for Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, Chang Yung-shan. Teams from 17 other countries, among them the United States and Japan, are already at work. Taipei and its backer, Washington, have assumed a more provocative stance towards Beijing in recent months.

30,000 march in Poland

"Thieves, thieves" chanted 30,000 workers and farmers marching September 24 through the streets of Warsaw, the capital of Poland. Workers from the Lucznik rifle factory carried a banner reading "We want to live and work with dignity." The unionists demanded wage increases and job guarantees, while the farmers called on the Polish government to guarantee higher prices for their produce.

Some protesters burned the European Union flag. The deeply unpopular government of Jerzy Buzek hopes the country will be admitted to membership of the European Union in 2002. Poland became one of NATO's newest members earlier this year. Last year foreign investors, among them the International Monetary Fund, sunk more funds into Poland than into any other East European nation. The country has experienced the fastest economic growth in the region over the last five years. The government's restructuring of industries has cost many jobs, and class and regional divisions have grown.

German military stages protests

Five thousand soldiers in the German army booed the defense minister, Rudolf Scharping, in Berlin September 11, despite his protestations of support for their demonstration opposing cuts in the military budget proposed by Finance Minister Hans Eichel. The protest added to the problems of the government of Gerhard Schröder, whose Social Democratic Party was



Sun Chi-kwang is rescued in Taipei on September 26. Around 2,000 died in devastating quake. Seventeen countries have donated assistance, but Taipei rejected offer from China.

soundly defeated by the Christian Democratic Union in state and municipal elections in early September.

Schröder defended his call for budget cuts of \$16 billion September 16, declaring that Germany could no longer "devour [its] resources." His proposed reductions especially target social security. More than 4 million workers are unemployed, and the national debt has ballooned in the unavailing effort to swallow East Germany whole. The German economy is one-third larger than that of the next biggest European power, France.

'Market system' worsens women's conditions in E. Europe

"The status of women is eroding" in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, said Carol Bellamy of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which released a study of 27 countries in the region September 22. The impact on women of the increasing use of the methods of the capitalist market, the privatization of some industry, and the decline in state provision of essential so-

cial services, has been devastating. Of the 25 million jobs lost in the area in the last decade, reports UNICEF, an estimated 14 million were held by women.

Women's reduced life expectancy dropped over the last 10 years in 16 of the 27 countries studied. Among the health problems affecting women are a steep rise in the reported cases of H.I.V./AIDS and syphilis. Women's second-class status is reflected in the fact that in Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, only 18 and 1 percent respectively of parliamentarians were female.

Alabama clinics stay open

"This clinic stays open" read a sign outside the New Woman All Women Health Care clinic in Birmingham, Alabama. From September 17 to September 20, defenders of a woman's right to choose abortion mobilized to keep open two clinics that the anti-choice organization Operation Rescue had vowed to close.

Other new fronts in the ongoing conflict over abortion rights have opened recently. State laws in Iowa, Nebraska, and Arkansas banning some late-term abortions were ruled unconstitutional by a federal appeals court September 24. "These decisions reaffirm that the Constitution still applies to women and their health care," said Janet Benshoof, the president of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy. Thirty states have passed such laws, and in 18 of them implementation has been blocked by federal courts. A similar law is currently before Congress. Meanwhile, on September 26 New Jersey became the 39th state to pass laws restricting the right to choose for youth. Before having an abortion, a woman of less than 18 years must notify at least one parent. Opponents of both these decisions are appealing them.

Washington and London push for inspections against Iraq

Representatives of the United States and Britain have so far failed to gain agreement on the United Nations Security Council for a new regime of intrusive weapons inspections against Iraq. Washington and London insist that Baghdad permit inspections before there is a possibility of lifting the sanctions that have now been wreaking their toll on the Iraqi people for almost a decade. Earlier this year, the White House was forced to admit U.S. spies worked under cover in Iraq on the UN Special Commission as "weapons inspectors."

Officials of France, Russia, and China, who with Britain and the United States form the five permanent council members, state that the embargo should be lifted more rapidly. French foreign minister Hubert Védrine accused Washington of "insensitivity to the human disaster" in Iraq. Paris is preparing to take advantage of trade and investment links already established with Baghdad, which opposes any new inspections. Warplanes from the U.S. and Britain are still carrying out regular bombing raids over Iraq.

Cameroon taxi drivers strike

Taxi drivers in the Cameroon cities of Yaounde and Douala organized a strike on September 6 to protest the decision announced by the national petroleum company to increase gasoline prices by over one-third. The drivers also oppose the many taxes they have to pay, and the checkpoints operated by police where money is openly demanded. A motion to strike was carried unanimously at a meeting in Yaounde of the Syndicate for Employed Taxi Drivers of Cameroon.

Workers in Nigeria demand jobs

Protesters on Bonny Island, Nigeria, erected barricades to blockade the newly opened \$3.8 billion Nigeria Liquefied National Gas (NLNG) plant September 20. They also enforced a blockade of the nearby Port Harcourt with threats to attack the port's authority from canoes. The Bonny communities are demanding that the company assist in developing water and electricity supplies. They also declare that some jobs at the plant should be set aside for local people. NLNG, a state-run company whose shareholders include Royal Dutch Shell, Elf-Aquitaine, and Agip companies, and the state-run Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, has opened talks with representatives of the community and the local governor.

Less than 300 miles to the west, in the capital Lagos, police and soldiers opened fire on demonstrating dock workers September 9, leaving 10 dead. The workers are fighting for reinstatement after having been fired under the former military regime of Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar.

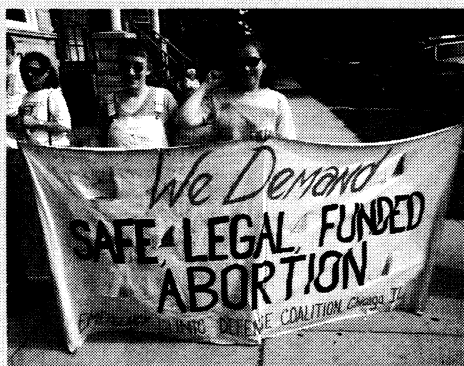
— PATRICK O'NEILL

Jeanne FitzMaurice in Birmingham, Alabama, contributed to this column.

THE MILITANT

Defend women's right to choose

The right of women to choose to have an abortion faces a number of legal attacks by right-wing forces. At the same time, support for this fundamental right is deeper than ever, and women are in a stronger position to defend it. The 'Militant' reports this fight and defends the right to choose. Don't miss a single issue!



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Ethel Lobman: 55 years of unbroken activity in the communist movement

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

NEWYORK — Ethel Lobman, a veteran cadre of the Socialist Workers Party for more than 55 years, died at her home in Manhattan on September 28. She had been battling brain cancer since late 1998. She was 75.

Lobman joined the SWP in 1943, when she was 19. Just prior to joining, she worked in a factory in lower Manhattan producing and repairing magnetos for airplane engines and radar for planes and ships. She was among the hundreds of thousands of women during World War II who got industrial jobs from which they had previously been excluded.

She became a cadre of the party during the postwar labor radicalization from the mid- to late 1940s and during the McCarthyite witch-hunt of the early 1950s. During that latter period, Lobman assumed responsibilities as a youth leader and leader of various branches of the party in New York, where she lived for the rest of her life. She was a leader of the struggle against racism and for community control of the schools in District 1 of Manhattan's Lower East Side in the early 1970s. She remained an active communist to her last days.

"The New York/New Jersey district of the party is organizing a meeting to celebrate Ethel's political experience and communist activity over this extensive segment of modern history," said SWP national secretary Jack Barnes in a September 28 letter informing party members and supporters of Lobman's death. Barnes will be among the speakers at that meeting, which will take place on Sunday, October 10.

Born in the Bronx, New York, on August 4, 1924, Lobman grew up in a family of Jewish workers who had immigrated to the United States from Lithuania at the beginning of the century. Her parents considered themselves socialists. Her mother was active in the Workmen's Circle, which was organized by Yiddish-speaking radicals and was politically tied to the Socialist Party, and became a supporter of the SWP later in life.

The Great Depression of the 1930s, the labor struggles of that decade that led to the formation of industrial unions and the CIO, and the sharpening class struggle in Europe put their stamp on Lobman, as on thousands of others of her generation.

Activities to support Spanish revolution

In 1936, when Ethel was 12 years old, civil war broke out in Spain. "It was the daily topic of conversation," she wrote in an account of her political experiences through the early 1950s that she completed during the last year of her life. "I was then in the Red Falcons, the very young section of the Young Peoples Socialist League (YPSL)," the youth organization of the Socialist Party. "We spent lots of time and energy raising money on the subways. Once I was walking through the subway cars saying, 'Help the Loyalists in Spain,' and an elderly woman leaned forward and sweetly announced, 'Oh, but I'm for the Royalists.' I was so shocked that anyone would actually admit to being for the fascists."

In response to the growing social crisis at the time, and faced with the uprising of fascist forces backed by a large section of the army officer corps, the Spanish workers and peasants had begun to seize factories and the land. The toilers, however, were led by an uneasy and ill-fated coalition of bourgeois liberals, Stalinists, social democrats, centrists, and anarchists more afraid of the plebeian revolt than of the fascist menace. The "Popular Front" government elected in 1936 came under assault by General Francisco Franco's fascist forces, which had the active support of the fascist Hitler and Mussolini regimes and tacit backing of other imperialist powers. The "Loyalists" Lobman was referring to were those who opposed Franco's fascist onslaught. Aided by the counterrevolutionary policies and thuggery of the Stalinist leadership of the Communist Party of Spain, and by the refusal of anarchist or centrist forces to lead the rising working class and peasant masses to establish a government of the exploited majority, Franco's forces defeated the proletarian revolution, paving the road to World War II.

Shortly before Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939, Ethel had joined the Youth Com-



Militant photos
Above, Ethel Lobman at wheel on visit to Cuba in 1960, following revolutionary triumph of workers and peasants. Standing beside car is Arthur Lobman; in back seat are fellow SWP cadres Priscilla March and Harry Ring. Lobman maintained her communist activity her entire life. At right, January 1998 picket denounces U.S. bombing of Iraq.

mittee Against the War in her high school. "This was the youth section of the Socialist Party's Keep America Out of War Committee," Lobman wrote. "We had quite a large group at my school in the Bronx. We held street corner meetings and gave out leaflets explaining the issues as we understood them. That the coming war was an imperialist war to be fought over markets. This was an accepted understanding among a large section of youth and workers who were going through the miseries of the depression."

World War II causes differentiation

Many of her friends soon succumbed to the pressures of bourgeois propaganda and became disoriented by the course of the Socialist Party and Communist Party, which backed the Democratic administration of Franklin Roosevelt in leading Washington into the interimperialist slaughter. Lobman, however, remained steadfast in her opposition to U.S. entry into the war.

In December 1941, Tokyo's attack at Pearl Harbor, which was provoked by Washington, was used by the U.S. rulers as the pretext to enter the war.

"Just about the time of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into the war, I attended my first class of a series given by the SWP in the Labor Temple on 14th Street and Second Avenue," Lobman wrote. She had been invited by the father of a friend who had been in the left wing of the Socialist Party, which split from the SP in 1938 and founded the Socialist Workers Party.

The Workers Party, the predecessor of the SWP, had entered the Socialist Party in 1936 to link up with its left wing, which included thousands of radicalizing workers and youth, and recruit as many of them as possible to building a proletarian party that could lead the toilers to take power out of the hands of the exploiting classes. The majority of the SP's youth organization, the YPSL, joined the revolutionaries who founded the SWP.

The classes Lobman participated in included presentations by party leaders George Novack on dialectical materialism and Felix Morrow on the history and evolution of the first three workers internationals. Lobman had been an avid reader since her childhood. These study groups, combined with her political activity, were instrumental in opening the road to Marxism for her. "But at that time I had no intention of joining," Lobman wrote. "I was a senior in high school, and I had vague plans of going to college where some of my closest friends were heading."

After graduating from high school in 1942, she was accepted into Cornell's College of Agriculture, which was free of charge then. She quickly became uncomfortable with the prowar atmosphere that dominated the campus and the habits and mode of life of many of the students who came from upper middle-



class families. At the end of that year she returned to the Bronx and got a job at Wright Aeronautics in Lodi, New Jersey, that was organized by the United Auto Workers (UAW). She used to ride to work with four others from her neighborhood who were members of the Communist Party, as were a number of Lobman's relatives.

"During the long drive back and forth the war was thoroughly discussed by these four CPers. Class struggle was not in their vocabulary," Lobman wrote. "We were all members of the UAW, which was never referred to. Their talk was totally chauvinistic. They were patriotic. They detested the Germans without any differentiation between the defeated working class and the capitalists who had all been financed by the U.S. and other Allied powers.... I couldn't really relate to any of these people."

So when a friend who had joined the SWP suggested she get a job in a factory in lower Manhattan she jumped at the chance. On the job at the International Projector Corporation — which had been converted from producing movie projectors to making and repairing components for military aircraft and ships — she met Debbie, a cadre of the SWP, and began to collaborate with her politically. The factory was organized by the United Electrical Workers (UE) union, the leadership of which was dominated by the Communist Party. All union representatives at the plant, as well as the foreman, were CPers. One morning in 1943, Debbie told Ethel before starting work that she expected to be fired because Stalinists from the plant had seen her selling *The Militant* at a National Maritime Union rally in Manhattan. Debbie's premonition came true moments after the workday began. "Then the Stalinist forelady came directly over to me, bent over, and whispered, 'If you are not out of here in one minute we are bringing you up on charges of sabotage!'" Lobman recounted. "To be charged with sabotage in wartime was no joke."

After being driven out of her job, she began to realize that the

counterrevolutionary policies and thuggery of Stalinism in other parts of the world that she had heard or read about had direct implications for her. "Politics, I saw now, was a very serious matter," Lobman wrote. "It could be a life and death matter. I was 19 and that didn't scare me.... The experience pushed me more towards the party."

She became a member of the SWP in November 1943. Lobman went through a similar experience at her next job at Bell Labs, where another SWP member lost her job in the middle of a union organizing drive by the UE after Stalinist union organizers realized she was selling the *Militant*. At that workplace, Lobman recruited another young woman, Beezie, to the party.

Postwar labor radicalization

Towards the end of the war in 1945, Lobman moved to Los Angeles to help build the communist movement there. She hitch-hiked across the country along with Beezie. One of the things that impressed her on the way, she recounted, was the respect and admiration truck drivers she spoke to expressed for Farrell Dobbs. "We all trust him," these long-distance drivers would tell her.

Dobbs, a leader of the 1934 strikes that made Minneapolis a union town, was the central leader of the 11-state Teamster over-the-road organizing drive in the upper Midwest in the latter half of the 1930s. He was national secretary of the SWP from 1953 to 1972 and its presidential candidate four times. Dobbs and 17 other leaders of the SWP and of the Teamsters union had been convicted in December 1941 and subsequently imprisoned on charges of "conspiring to advocate the overthrow of the U.S. government,"

because of their opposition to the drive by Washington and Wall Street to drag workers and farmers in the United States into the slaughter of World War II. Their convictions had been the first under the notorious Smith "Gag" Act. Lobman had taken part in New York in the campaign to win their release. The broad appeal of that campaign, especially in the labor movement, played a major role in the recruitment of Beezie.

Among Lobman's first activities in Los Angeles was participation in demonstrations of up to 20,000 people to protest the effort by Gerald L. K. Smith to set up the national headquarters of a fascist organization in the city. Smith had been in the Silver Shirts, a fascist group that organized goon attacks on the rising labor movement in the 1930s. The protests in Los Angeles were so successful that they forced Smith and his goons to ditch their plans for setting up operations there.

While in California, Lobman took sewing classes and picked up the skills to get into a garment shop, as part of the party ef-

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CELEBRATE

The political experience and communist activity of

Ethel Lobman

New York City

Sunday, October 10

Reception: 1 p.m.

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'People have been asking for this book'

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"We set out to revisit the picket lines at Introforest in Durham, Ontario, where Local 500 of the International Woodworkers of America was organizing a charity BBQ and lawn sale," writes Sylvie Charbin in one of a number of reports from teams promoting *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*.

"On the way," she continues, "we stopped at a bookstore in Owen Sound that one of the strikers had told us about. When we arrived at the picket line we described the visit to Chrystelle, a striker, and showed her our briefcase of sample books. Her husband is a beef farmer. She immediately bought a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. She also bought *Women's Evolution*, by Evelyn Reed."

Capitalism's World Disorder is Pathfinder's newest book. The speeches by Socialist Workers Party leader Jack Barnes printed in the book address the key political developments of the last decade and more, helping orient all those fighting capitalist injustice.

That's why supporters of Pathfinder are organizing a campaign to sell the book to workers, farmers, and young people across the United States and in a number of other countries, and to place it in bookstores and libraries where many more working people can get the chance to see it.

From New Zealand, Janet Roth writes,

"Three socialist workers from Auckland took part in a sales trip to Palmerston North and the Hawkes Bay, visiting bookstores and selling outside plant gates and to university students.

"First stop was the house of a student who had bought *Capitalism's World Disorder* and a subscription to the *Militant* the last time we called. We spent two and a half hours with him and six of his friends. After a presentation by a Young Socialists member there was discussion on the intervention by imperialist troops in East Timor.

"None of those present agreed with the team members' view that this is a setback for the struggle by East Timorese for their independence. They also weren't backing the intervention, however, with a couple expressing concern that it would just lead to more bloodshed. At the end, the host bought two pamphlets, the *Communist Manifesto* and *Abortion is a Woman's Right*."

Roth reports that the team also set up outside "a meatpacking plant and food processing factory, where we sold five *Militants* apiece. That was in the Hawkes Bay; in Palmerston North, we sold outside a clothing factory of 80-100 workers, where one woman bought a copy after seeing the paper's coverage of union struggles. A four-hour sale at Massey University netted sales of 15 *Militants* and a copy of *Malcolm X*

Talks to Young People."

Naomi Craine reports from a three-person, three-day team in the Newport News, Virginia, area that built on the work of previous teams. Thirty-one workers bought copies of the *Militant* at sales outside the giant Newport News and Norshipco shipyards, and at two meatpacking plants.

"Our biggest success among visits to bookstores," she recalls, "was to a small store with a lot of titles on the Black struggle that a Newport News worker had suggested. The store also carries other items, such as food and clothing.

"After a couple of visits the buyer ordered 10 titles, including a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and a range of books and pamphlets on struggles against national oppression and imperialism.

"They organize some political events at the store, including a seminar on the fight against slavery in November, and bus trips to the site of Nat Turner's slave rebellion," adds Craine.

Another special team is currently on the road in the western coal fields; next week's column will report on their experiences.

Capitalism's World Disorder was among the top sellers at Pathfinder bookstore stalls at bookfairs in Baltimore and New York. "People have actually been asking for the book" said the owner of a Baltimore bookstore as he ordered three copies of

Capitalism's World Disorder," writes Barbara Greenway.

The visit to his store followed up on the work of the six volunteers who staffed a stall at the September 24-25 "Baltimore Reads Bookfair." Participants at the fair bought \$675 worth of Pathfinder literature, including four copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, as well as 30 *Militants* and two subscriptions to the paper, Greenway reports. "The number one topic of discussion was Cuba, and we sold 16 different books on this subject."

At the "New York is Book Country" Festival in Manhattan on September 25, nine people bought *Capitalism's World Disorder*, with total sales going over \$900. As in Baltimore, many people wanted to talk about the fight to free the Puerto Rican political prisoners, and were drawn to the Pathfinder pamphlet *Independence is a Necessity* by Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda.

"More people can have access to these revolutionary books"

The report below was sent to the *Militant* by a construction worker in Atlanta on a successful visit to place Pathfinder's Spanish-language titles in a bookstore there.

BY MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ

ATLANTA — Reading the Spanish-language newspaper here, I came across an advertisement for a bookstore. I decided I had to see it, since in Atlanta it is very difficult to find bookstores with revolutionary books, especially ones in Spanish. After buying some books and magazines in the store, I talked to the proprietor. She asked me if I liked to read and I said yes — but political books. She asked "Where do you buy your books?" and I explained that many of the books in Spanish that I have read in the United States are from Pathfinder Press, and that I knew people from Pathfinder. I also suggested she should see Pathfinder books for herself.

She responded affirmatively, and a few days later an appointment was made. Two of us visited and left her a catalog. After we discussed with her some of the most current books, she indicated she wanted titles on Latin America, and we pointed out some of the *Nueva Internacional* series, as well as *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Che.

A few days later the Pathfinder bookstore called to tell me that the woman had ordered 27 books; I was pleased to hear this, since it was the biggest contribution that I have made to Pathfinder. When I spoke with her the first time, I didn't think she would be interested in so many Pathfinder books, since they deal only with political questions.

Among the books she ordered were the Spanish-language versions of the *Selected Works* of Marks and Engels, as well as Lenin; *The Revolution Betrayed* by Trotsky; three issues of *Nueva Internacional*, entitled "Che Guevara, Cuba, and the road to Socialism," "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution," and "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War;" books on Che; and a subscription to *La Gaceta de Cuba*, the magazine of culture and politics in Cuba.

It's worth mentioning that this bookstore is very small, and it also sells records that take up the same space inside as the books. Not only are political books sold, but among the music are collections of songs with social themes.

Now I'm convinced that I must look for more stores or other outlets, no matter how small, to speak with the proprietors, so more people can have access to these revolutionary books. In this way I can contribute not only to selling books but to strengthening the working class movement, which uses these books as one of its most effective weapons.

Volunteers aim to finish scanning by 2000

BY TOMTOMASKO

The Reprint Project is an effort by supporters of the communist movement in several countries to help keep in print the lessons of the modern working-class movement. Pathfinder Press publishes more than 350 books and pamphlets that contain those lessons. In order to keep the titles in print they must all be converted to digital form to take advantage of the latest technology in printing.

In the year and a half of the project almost 50 titles have been made ready for reprint. The project is aiming to complete by Jan. 1, 2000 the first step in reproducing books electronically. That step is to scan the books and pamphlets so that all the text is digital. The next steps are to proofread the text, create a new format for it, and to digitize the covers and photographs.

The following is a letter written by Warren Simons who is the organizer of a team of volunteers that are making digital the text of the books. The letter is addressed to the team.

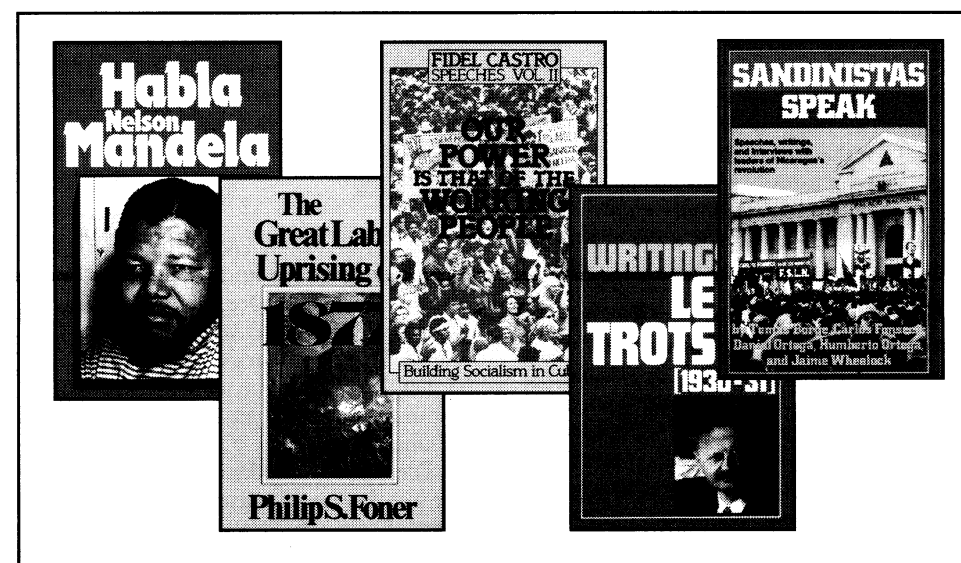
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Dear volunteers,

This political report will discuss the goal of finishing the scanning of all the Pathfinder titles that the Reprint Project has taken responsibility to do by January 2000.

I just finished reading *Capitalism's World Disorder* and found several parts in it that speak directly to why we are doing this work. Over the course of time, sitting in front of my computer, I've occasionally lost sight of the overall picture in the haze of the tediousness and time-consuming nature of the work. I found the book politically refreshing and inspiring and I repeat some of it here for you:

"Never before in history has there been a bigger disproportion between the current small numerical size and negligible social weight of communist organizations in the mass labor movement, and the leverage of the political weapons we produce, translate, edit, circulate, and get around in whatever ways we can. There is nothing like it in the history of the workers movement. I do not know what better word to choose than 'leverage' — it is an easy, physical analogy. Whether we are participating in a book fair in Tokyo or Tehran, a university conference in Cuba, or a meeting of young fighters in South Africa — we have the same experiences everywhere. Fighters want to get their hands on the Communist Manifesto, on books about the Russian revolution, on copies of *New International* magazine, on books about politics and the labor movement in the United States, on literature about the revolutions in Cuba and South Africa, on books about the Black struggle, on works that give



A few of the 44 books volunteers are pushing to complete scanning by the year 2000

a scientific explanation of women's oppression and the road to their liberation....

"Stalinism has deep historical roots in the most important working-class struggles of this century. It has affected broad social and political forces. We are not asking delegates to vote on historical assessments here. What we are insisting on, however, is that revolutionary politicians need to recognize that, because of the weakening of Stalinism's weight, our propaganda weapons give communists the greatest relative political leverage and widest potential audience we have had in some six decades....

"But a point is always reached where working people can be conned no longer and struggles begin to mount. And with revolutionary leadership, forged and tested in coming struggles, the international working class has the numbers, the social power, the culture, the values, and the program to defeat the reactionary forces loosed by finance capital. We can organize victorious revolutions and open the construction of socialism on a world scale.

"That is what we are preparing for. That is what is so important about political weapons such as the new issue of *New International* that we are celebrating here. That is why it is so important to get this magazine — along with the *Militant*, the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*, and our entire arsenal of revolutionary books and pamphlets published and distributed by Pathfinder — into the hands of workers and young people who are fighters and aspire to be revolutionists....

"The bourgeoisie, with its allied landed and titled aristocrats, is the class that claims to be so magnificently educated. But the class that is truly interested in ideas is the

working class. Ideas are decisive for the working class, because ideas are necessary to forge a self-confident proletarian leadership and chart a course for humanity. We have said before that if all the political books were to disappear from the world tomorrow, it would not really hurt the bourgeoisie that much. The workings and reproduction of value relations would continue pumping out profits for them, and pragmatism would be the totally sufficient 'philosophical' complement to social power.

"But if every such book in the world were to disappear — if all the continuity, if all the lessons from the rise of humanity and struggles by the toilers were erased from the written record — the workers movement would be set back an indescribable distance. That is why we place such importance on the opportunities that are opening up to distribute books and other literature by revolutionists and communists more widely than ever before....

"Workers who want to fight effectively know they'll never win if they have to reinvent the wheel every day. They resist giving up conquered ground. They want to learn from the lessons of past battles. They know previous sacrifices cannot be allowed to have been in vain. Given the changes in politics today, the concrete working-class traditions captured in the books and pamphlets produced and circulated by the communist movement become more and more important. These tools are literally irreplaceable; they are weapons of a fighting class, not just its leading party. Many before us bled — and, yes died — in the fights out of which these lessons were learned. That's why the stakes are so high in keeping in print the entire arsenal of books and pamphlets published and dis-

Continued on Page 5

L.A. students demand right to education

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and others fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, CA, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429. Email: INTERNET:105162.605@compuserve.com

BY PATRICIA GUTIÉRREZ
ANDANA CHÁVEZ

LOS ANGELES — Students at Fremont High School here walked out September 10 demanding to be heard and calling for their right to an education. Approximately 3,000 students — 90 percent according to school officials — took to the streets, alongside parents who protested in solidarity. Their demands were raised not only for Fremont students, but for all students fighting for their rights, and for all those opposed to the lack of equal education in society today.

A leaflet drafted by Students of Fremont High School includes such demands as:

- Teachers (not substitutes) in all classes,
- A security that respects us and does not

search without probable cause (TARDY is not a probable cause),

- Lockers are a right, not a privilege. Students should be given lockers without conditions, and
- A librarian.

For weeks the library had been closed because there was no librarian, and students did not have space within the school to study.

Students who organized the walkout said all their faxes, letters, and calls to the superintendent were ignored. They responded by deciding to take the next step and walk out.

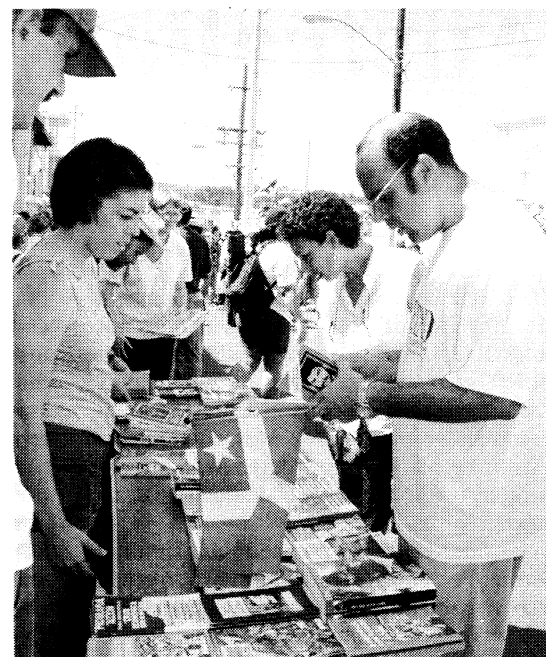
As of the day of the walkout, 17 positions were still not filled with full-time teachers. The school was short on staff, and substitutes were on call every day. That's why permanent teachers was a central demand.

As a result of the walkout, the Los Angeles Unified School District felt pressured to take some actions on what the students were demanding. Seven hundred new lockers have been ordered so that every student can have one, the library was reopened, and the school security has modified its searching policies, student leader Jesus Najera reported. Several

student leaders have been included in the process of interviewing new teachers to fill the vacancies.

One week after the protest, the students who organized the action demanded an assembly, which was granted to them. The assembly informed all the students about changes that would be happening within the next weeks and months to address some of their concerns. A student organization was formed shortly before the walkout and strengthened as a result of the student-led action, the Student Organizer for a Better Fremont. It consists of members who are in grades 9-12.

While meeting with the students who were part of the walkout, Luis Ortega, a leader of the organization, said, "I never expected all this media attention towards us." He and co-organizer Najera expressed their determination to continue the fight for a better education in working-class communities such as South-Central Los Angeles, even after they graduate.



YS member Romina Green (left) in Puerto Rico

Volunteers' 'Scan 2000' project

Continued from Page 4

tributed by Pathfinder — from works coming out of more contemporary experience, such as *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, the issues of *New Internationalist* magazine, and a broad range of pamphlets on current struggles and political topics; to classics of the communist movement by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, James P. Cannon, Farrell Dobbs, and others....

We currently have 43 more books and 16 more pamphlets to finish to complete the scanning and massaging work. In addition there are 21 titles already in digitized form but not quite ready for formatting. The average size of the 43 books is 333 pages. About a dozen of them are 500-plus-page books. There are four-teen volunteers working in our department. Tom has agreed to do all the pamphlets. I will work on clearing out the 21 previously digitized not quite ready for formatting titles. Both of us will join the work on the 43 books when

we are done.

This is a tall order — finishing 43 books between now and the end of the year, January 2000. I am asking each of you to consider stepping up your participation in the work in order to accomplish it.

The completion date isn't just a fetish for goals or a fascination for the millennium. The party currently does not have the resources to accomplish this task. At the August Active Workers Conference at Oberlin Mary-Alice Waters speculated that if something like the recent student rebellion that occurred in Iran happened in the U.S., Pathfinder would probably go "out of stock" on the great majority of its titles overnight. That is, a golden political opportunity to begin winning fighters to com-

munist and no books to go into propaganda combat with. She noted that it's not possible to predict the pace of events but it helps give us a sense of urgency and the race with time that the Reprint Project faces. The sooner we complete our work the sooner we can all move onto proofreading, formatting, or graphics. And the quicker all 350 of Pathfinder's titles become print ready. We can then be assured of a political arsenal for the fighters who will come forward as the capitalist crisis deepens and the response to it unfolds.

Let's give it the best we can and see what we come up with.

Warren Simons

Young Socialists Fund Drive

| City | Goal | Received | % |
|-----------------------|-------|----------|-----|
| San Francisco | 800 | 110 | 14% |
| Chicago | 1,200 | 157 | 13% |
| Detroit | 350 | 45 | 13% |
| Fort Collins | 200 | 25 | 13% |
| Des Moines | 130 | 10 | 8% |
| Seattle | 400 | 25 | 6% |
| Chippewa Falls | 200 | 5 | 3% |
| Birmingham | 550 | 0 | 0% |
| Los Angeles | 500 | 0 | 0% |
| Minneapolis | 500 | 0 | 0% |
| New York | 700 | 0 | 0% |
| Newark | 500 | 0 | 0% |
| Pittsburgh | 200 | 0 | 0% |
| Santa Cruz | 650 | 0 | 0% |
| Philadelphia | 400 | 0 | 0% |
| Atlanta | 0 | 0 | |
| Total | 7,280 | 377 | 5% |
| Should be | 8,000 | | |

Pathfinder Fund supporters meet goal of pledges, now it's time to collect

BY ABBY TILSNER

"We surpassed our expectations of supporter contributions by \$2,000!" wrote Karen Ray in San Francisco, in a note explaining that supporters of the Pathfinder Fund there had raised their goal to \$12,500. Local quotas for the August 15 — November 15 Pathfinder Fund now total more than the international goal of \$125,000.

Local goals now total \$126,007, but funds received are only 16 percent of that, rather than 38 percent required to be on target.

Fund directors in each area need to be working with supporters to organize the events that will ensure the goals are met in full and on time.

In Pittsburgh supporters are planning a combined fundraiser with a grand opening of their new bookstore. "We think the tie-in is a natural and the event is exactly what we want to launch us at our new store," said Chris Remple.

The meeting is titled "Iran Today: 20th Anniversary of the Iranian Revolution" and will feature Ma'mud Shirvani, an editor for Pathfinder Press who has traveled throughout the region and written for the *Militant* newspaper on political events there.

Pathfinder participated in the 1999 Tehran Book Fair with a booth. Some young people were so hungry for the politics in Pathfinder's books that they came back day after day. "This, combined with the publishing

in Iran of a number of Pathfinder titles, shows the importance of Pathfinder for fighters, and we want to reach out broadly to get people to the meeting."

Remple explained that "the new bookstore is smaller and we are learning to work in tighter quarters. It's definitely in line with we are trying to do politically — a lean, ready-to-go operation that can move out to the resistance quickly. And it's also going to save us about \$300 a month."

Supporters in the area have already pledged \$4,100 to the Pathfinder Fund and they want to "use the event to get on track or ahead in our collection," said Remple.

Supporters in the New York/Newark area reported that nine copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes were sold during one day at the New York Is Book Country fair in that city. "The two people who decided to buy the book from me," said Lee Oleson, "did so following discussions about what Patrick Buchanan and Ross Perot represent in politics today and why working people need to reject their 'America First' demagoguery."

Socialist workers are taking that book, and the entire range of Pathfinder titles, to wherever working people are fighting.

For instance, socialist workers recently went on a regional sales team to the eastern coal fields of Pennsylvania where they sold to coal miners, workers and farmers in addition to some regional bookstores.

"This campaign is already bearing fruit," wrote Kathie Fitzgerald, the local fund director in Newark, New Jersey, in a letter sent to potential contributors. "Several bookstores suggested by Newport News strikers are now carrying *Capitalism's World Disorder*. A large regional wholesaler in

the South just sent in an order for more than 90 titles, and just this week a local bookstore in Virden, Illinois, sent in its first order for *Capitalism's World Disorder* and two copies of *Coal Miners on Strike*!"

To find out more about the fund, to get involved, or to make a contribution, contact your nearest Pathfinder bookstore listed on page 12. Please make all checks and money orders out to Pathfinder, earmarked Pathfinder Fund, and send to: **Pathfinder, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.**

Upcoming Fund Events

ILLINOIS CHICAGO

Cuba: 40 Years of Workers and Farmers in Power. Speaker: Martin Koppel, one of the interviewers in *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*, coming soon from Pathfinder. Sat., Oct. 9, 7 p.m. Dinner 5:30 p.m. Pathfinder Bookstore, 1223 N. Milwaukee Av. At Ashland and Division (Division station on the Blue line). Program: \$5. Dinner: \$5. Translation into Spanish. For more information, call (773) 342-1780.

PENNSYLVANIA PITTSBURGH

Iran Today. 20th Anniversary of the Iranian Revolution. Speaker: Ma'mud Shirvani, editor for Pathfinder Press. Shirvani has traveled throughout the region and written for the *Militant* newspaper on political developments there. Sat., Oct. 9, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Grand opening at new Pathfinder Bookstore, 1003 E. Carson. For more information, call (412) 381-9785.

CANADA VANCOUVER

Puerto Rico: U.S. Colony in the Caribbean. The Fight for Independence. Speaker: Mauricio Arevena, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Oct. 8, 7:30 p.m. At the new Pathfinder Bookstore, 4321 Fraser St. (between 27 and 28 Ave. For more information, call (604) 872-8343.

| PATHFINDER FUND RAISE \$125,000 TO HELP PRODUCE THE BOOKS WORKERS AND FARMERS NEED NOW | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| Area | Goal | Paid | Percent |
| United States | | | |
| Detroit | 4,500 | 1,725 | 38% |
| Twin Cities | 10,000 | 3,514 | 35% |
| Cleveland | 4,000 | 1,175 | 29% |
| Cape Girardeau | 150 | 40 | 27% |
| Pittsburgh | 4,000 | 1,030 | 26% |
| Atlanta | 3,500 | 820 | 23% |
| Philadelphia | 3,600 | 750 | 21% |
| Miami | 3,500 | 705 | 20% |
| Boston | 4,100 | 810 | 20% |
| Newark | 9,000 | 1,580 | 18% |
| Chicago | 8,000 | 1,350 | 17% |
| New York | 13,000 | 1,945 | 15% |
| Houston | 6,500 | 925 | 14% |
| St. Louis | 1,300 | 150 | 12% |
| Washington, D.C. | 6,000 | 200 | 3% |
| San Francisco | 12,500 | 300 | 2% |
| Ft. Collins | 475 | 10 | 2% |
| Los Angeles | 8,000 | 160 | 2% |
| Des Moines | 1,800 | 25 | 1% |
| Seattle | 11,000 | 100 | 1% |
| Birmingham | 3,000 | 10 | 0% |
| Chippewa Falls | 0 | 150 | 0% |
| Other U.S. | 1,382 | 662 | 48% |
| France | 500 | 250 | 50% |
| New Zealand | 2,550 | 1,230 | 48% |
| Canada | 3,650 | 905 | 25% |
| United Kingdom | 0 | 40 | 0% |
| Totals | \$126,00 | \$20,561 | 16% |
| Should be | \$125,00 | \$48,075 | 38% |

Australian troops stage show of force in E. Timor

Continued from front page

sance team of U.S. Marines already in East Timor. The head of the U.S. Pacific Command, Admiral Dennis Blair, has said he does not rule out U.S. ground troops should Australian officials in Canberra ask for further support "as the mission expands." The Australian commander of Interfet, Maj. Gen. Peter Cosgrove, has already ordered in additional combat troops ahead of scheduled logistical support forces.

Indonesian forces invaded East Timor, a former Portuguese colony, in 1975 to crush a short-lived independent government there (see article on facing page). On August 30 of this year, the East Timorese people voted resoundingly for independence in a UN-organized referendum. The announcement of the poll results September 4 was the signal for the occupying Indonesian military to launch two weeks of killing, burning, and looting by "militia" gangs against independence supporters. Most of the urban population fled into the countryside.

Having stood aside for the rightist terror to take effect both on the East Timorese people and on public opinion at home, political leaders in Washington, Canberra, and other capitalist powers then moved rapidly to intervene, mounting heavy political and financial pressure on the regime of Indonesian president B.J. Habibie. Jakarta was forced to give grudging assent as it was shouldered aside by the same powers that had previously backed the Indonesian military's brutal occupation.

Imperialist troops extend control

Officially, the Indonesian military gave the Interfet soldiers "a cordial reception" as they arrived ashore at Dili, although later it was admitted that "tensions" were on the increase. Sporadic shooting by militia members and Indonesian troops has occurred, but the Interfet command has insisted that "so far, no shots have been exchanged."

Most of the Indonesian army in East Timor has been withdrawn two months ahead of schedule. Many of the departing Indonesian soldiers left behind looted and torched facilities. On September 27, Maj. Gen. Kiki Syahnakri, TNI [Indonesian Army] commander in the territory, formally handed over security control to Interfet. Less than 1,500 Indonesian soldiers and police remain to be "gradually withdrawn" as the military-dominated regime in Jakarta tries to save face at the imperialist takeover.

In an aggressive show of force, heavily armed Australian troops have expanded street patrols and house searches in Dili. Scores of arrests have been made of suspected members of militias, either to disarm them or to protect them from outraged groups of people who recognize them. Those detained, as specified in the UN rules of engagement, are then handed over to Indonesian police, who are reportedly setting them free.

In Bacau, East Timor's second largest city, crowds surrounded a UN team shouting "Viva!" Father Trans Antonio Pinto told reporters, "People ran to the hills to escape the militia but now they are coming back, although very few have come back [so far]. They are celebrating the withdrawal of the [Indonesian] military." Of the hundreds of thousands who fled the terror, tens of thousands have begun

returning to burnt-out towns. In Dili, 3,000 people broke into Indonesian government warehouses September 22 taking rice, flour, and cooking oil before 30 Australian troops arrived to reinforce the Indonesian guards and disperse the crowd. Hungry groups of people trying to gain access to other food supplies were also repulsed by Interfet troops.

Elsewhere, air drops of food to concentrations of displaced people have been resumed after days of delays. UN officials blamed the holdup on Indonesian red tape requiring searches at Dili airport, but food flights from Darwin were displaced by military air traffic and journalists were given priority over medical workers.

The focus of potential armed conflict is now shifting to the border with West Timor. In the western half of the island, which has been part of Indonesia since that nation won independence in 1949, camps of up to 200,000 forcibly deported East Timorese are still dominated by armed pro-integration forces, whose bloody reprisals continue against independence supporters among the refugees. The reported movement of a big group of militia back across from West Timor is clearly a threat to "Operation Stabilise." These appear to have been reinforced by large numbers of East Timor-born or raised Indonesian army troops who have "defected" with their weapons.

Students protest Jakarta's security law

At the same time, student protests have again erupted on the streets of Jakarta and other cities protesting laws giving sweeping powers to the military. On September 23, in the final days of the old Indonesian parliament put in place under the ousted Suharto government, new security laws were passed giving the military and police wide "emergency" powers of detention and restrictions on public assembly if "public security" is deemed at risk.

In response, demonstrations led by students numbering 10,000 in Jakarta, and thousands in cities elsewhere in Indonesia, took to the streets. Police and soldiers fired live rounds, rubber bullets, and tear gas canisters at the protesters. Seven people were killed and scores injured. In response, Indonesian president Habibie said September 24 that he would delay signing the laws.

Mass protests continued the next day in Medan, an industrial city of 1.2 million people in northern Sumatra, as well as in Manokwari, on Irian Jaya (West Papua), where two student protesters were killed. Further actions were initially called in protest over the killings and demanding the resignation of Habibie and

General Wiranto, the head of the Indonesian military. Student leaders in Jakarta announced September 28 that the demonstrations would be postponed, however, to allow a "cooling off" period.

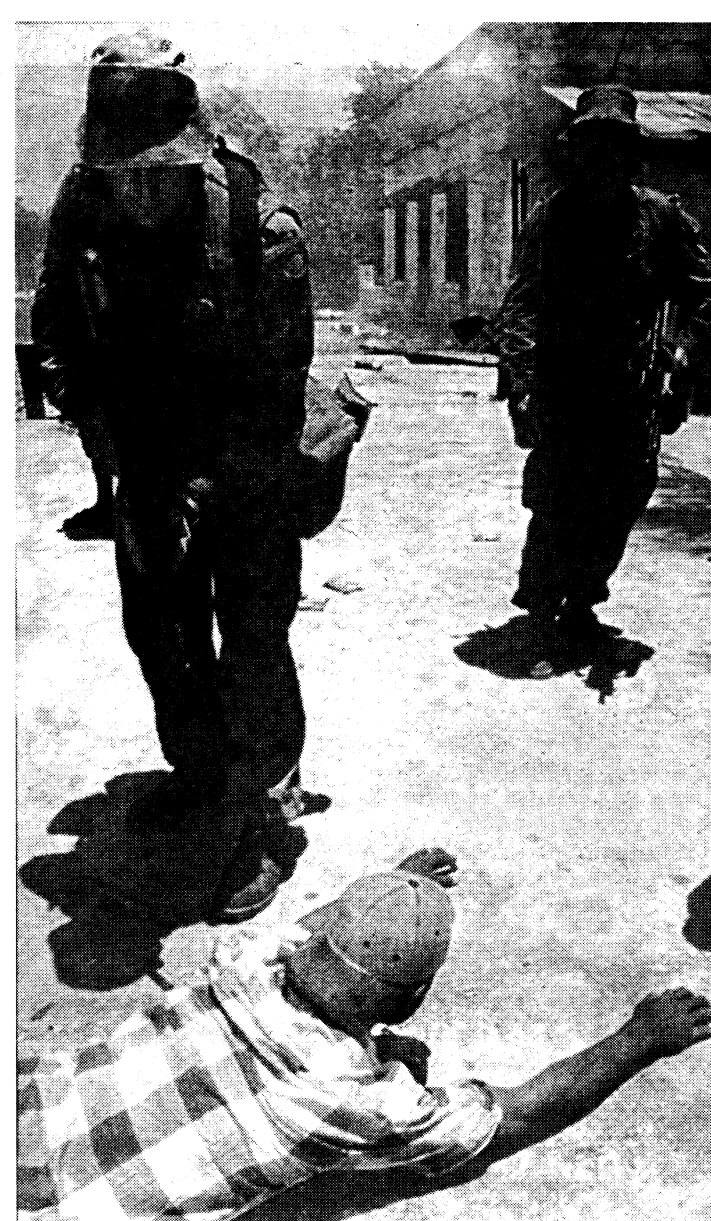
Among those urging the students to end their protests was Abdurrahman Wahid, a bourgeois opposition figure and presidential hopeful who is associated with National Mandate Party leader Amien Rais. Wahid called on protesters not to disrupt the newly elected People's Representative Assembly, which will begin meeting October 1 and will select the Indonesian president in November.

Australian militarization drive

Don Greenlees, the Jakarta correspondent for the daily *Australian*, gloated that Australian troops "landed in the shattered city of Dili with a moral conviction and the kind of wholehearted support from the Australian people that no departing army has enjoyed since 1939." The same article quotes Cameron Evans, a 29-year-old captain from Melbourne, saying, "This is a conflict that Australia not only has a responsibility but a duty to be involved in. It makes a big difference to the blokes to know they do have the support of the people at home; to know when we go home we are not pariahs."

This initial support for intervention plus the discussion over sustaining such a sizable troop commitment has provided Australia's rulers with the cover to launch a renewed militarization drive. Prime Minister John Howard was quoted in an interview in the September 28 *Bulletin* headlined "The Howard Doctrine," as saying that Canberra was a peacekeeping "deputy" in the region to the U.S. global policeman and that military spending would now have to come first.

Military analyst Paul Dibb warned, "The



Australian soldier, one of 3,700 imperialist troops in East Timor, threatens Timorese man in Dili September 27.

problem with 4,500 deployed right now is that if there was a serious emergency in Papua New Guinea or the Solomon Islands, we wouldn't have a lot left over to do that as well."

An urgent government review of the military will consider boosting the Army Reserve to support the "peacekeeping" operation, possibly by the reintroduction of the Ready Reserve, or increased full-time training for the Army Reserve. The Ready Reserve was a voluntary scheme where civilians spent a year in uniform and one month a year in military training thereafter. Prime Minister John Howard has not ruled out moves towards conscription. "We would always be willing to consider the introduction of national service if the national military and defense need of Australia required," he said.

Ron Poulsen is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia.

Lobman: 55 years of communist activity

Continued from Page 3

to build a fraction in that industry during the postwar upturn of the labor movement. She later got a job in Caltex, a nonunion garment plant, and helped lead a rank-and-file effort to unionize that factory. The majority of workers signed union cards for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) and many, including Lobman, organized a picket for months outside the plant to push for union recognition, which received nationwide news coverage. But officials of the ILGWU, which was dominated by social democrats, forestalled that unionization campaign, afraid of the momentum generated by the rank-and-file action.

In 1948 Lobman was elected for the first time as a delegate to the SWP's national convention, which was held in New York. At the end of that convention, she asked to transfer back to New York, where she lived the rest of her life.

1953 split

During the early 1950s a faction developed in the SWP leadership that led a split in 1953. A sizable minority in the party had abandoned hope of building a revolutionary party — recoiling in face of the witchhunt, and softened by the relative prosperity following Washington's victory over its imperialist rivals in

World War II. Supporters of this faction proposed curtailing or outright doing away with petitioning to put SWP candidates on the ballot, opposed organizing regular public meetings, and argued against adopting nationally centralized goals for sales of the *Militant* and fundraising.

Lobman was among the younger cadre of the party who defended the SWP's communist continuity and argued that communists could and should carry out public political work and broad propaganda campaigns, despite McCarthyism and the relative postwar prosperity and retreat of the labor movement. She was the organizer of the party's local executive committee in New York at that time and a leader of the party's New York youth section. "I never doubted my position," Lobman wrote. "Some things you start with — I started with believing that you need a party, a Bolshevik, revolutionary party."

Partisan of the Cuban revolution

On New Year's Day in 1959, the workers and peasants of Cuba, led by the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, overthrew the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista. The Cuban revolution opened the road to socialist revolution in the Americas and was encountering the wrath of Washington.

Soon after the revolutionary triumph, in the summer of 1960, Lobman took the initiative to travel to the Caribbean island to find out the truth about Cuba first hand. She went with Arthur Lobman, also a party member, whom she had married in October 1959 and who remained her lifelong companion.

In early 1960 Robert Taber, a free-lance reporter who had interviewed rebel leaders in Cuba for CBS news prior to the revolution, initiated the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. It was the first nationwide group in the United States to organize activities in opposition to Washington's attempts to crush the Cuban revolution. Lobman was an active member in the organization's chapter in New York. Along with others in the group, she helped organize a reception for Fidel Castro, who was Cuba's prime minister at that time, when he visited New York in 1960 to speak at the United Nations General Assembly.

The following year, Lobman attended the party leadership school at a camp in the Poconos mountains in New Jersey.

In the next two decades, she took part in numerous activities in the movement to end Jim Crow segregation in the South and in the anti-Vietnam War movement. During much of this time, Lobman did not work outside her home, devoting substantial time to raising her two daughters, Carrie and Sara.

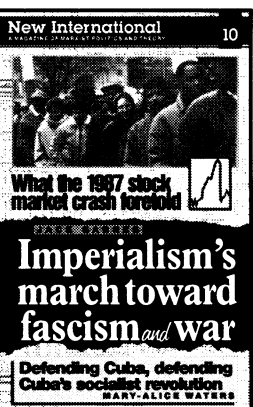
New York District 1 struggle

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lobman became a leader of the six-year-long struggle in School District 1 of Manhattan's Lower East Side for community control of the schools. She was chairperson of the Coalition for Education in School District 1 from 1972 to 1973 and a member of the executive committee of the Parent Association of Public School 63 from 1967 to 1972.

The struggle erupted into boycotts and dem-

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Centuries of struggle for self-determination

BY TERRY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—The struggle of the East Timorese people for self-determination, first against Portuguese colonialism and then against Indonesian occupation, demonstrates that, contrary to what is portrayed in the capitalist media, they are not helpless victims who need the intervention of imperialist troops. It also shows that the imperialist powers, above all the rulers of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, have been the consistent enemies of the fight for an independent East Timor.

East Timor, situated toward the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago, was a colony of Portugal for more than 400 years. Portuguese traders had arrived on the island in 1511, attracted by the natural riches of the region, particularly sandalwood. But in the face of sustained resistance by the indigenous Timorese, the Portuguese colonialists established their rule very slowly and unevenly. They did not bring the interior under their control until the 19th century, and only finally fixed the border dividing the island with their Dutch colonial rivals, who ruled Indonesia, in 1913.

There was a large-scale rebellion against colonial rule in 1910–12, which the Portuguese put down after killing more than 3,000 Timorese. The leader of the rising, Dom Boaventura, remains a hero to independence fighters today.

Portuguese rule was brutal. Slave labor, administered by the knout (whip), existed until the 1940s. As late as the 1970s the illiteracy rate was over 90 percent, and less than 20 doctors served a population of 650,000. The capital, Dili, was still without electricity, paved roads, or a town water supply.

During World War II, Timor became a battleground between the newest imperialist powers in the region, Japan and Australia. The Australian rulers in Canberra, who had grabbed the nearby former German colony in northeast New Guinea during World War I, considered Timor to be inside their sphere of influence.

In 1943, Australian external affairs minister Herbert Evatt declared, "Australia must show a particular interest in the welfare and system of control of those islands and territories which lie close to our shores. From the point of view of defense, trade and transport, most of them can fairly be described as coming within an extended Australian zone."

Anticolonial upsurge

A wave of anticolonial struggles swept Africa and Asia following World War II. Indonesia won its independence in 1949 after a four-year war against Dutch rule. The independence struggle in East Timor gained momentum in 1974–75, as national liberation movements in Portugal's African colonies won their freedom and a democratic revolution toppled the dictatorship in Lisbon.

In September 1974, youthful pro-independence activists formed the Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor (Fretilin), which rapidly won widespread popular support. Within a few months, Fretilin had launched a literacy campaign, conducted in Tetum, the most widely spoken of the local languages; initiated a number of agricultural cooperatives; set up organizations of workers, women, and students; and organized an armed wing, Falintil.

The other main party formed in this period, the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), based among officials in the colonial administration, coffee plantation owners, and traditional rulers, was opposed to Fretilin's radicalism. It tried to seize power through an Indonesian-supported coup in August 1975. After Fretilin was quickly able to defeat them in a one-month civil war, many UDT leaders then backed Jakarta's call for East Timor to become part of Indonesia. UDT leader Mario Carrascalao was later appointed Jakarta's gov-



Photo above shows pro-independence rally on March 13, 1975, in East Timorese city of Baucau. Banners read: "Only one power: the people; Only one party: Fretilin; Only one aim: Independence." Another reads: "After Portugal, independence." Two others: "Fretilin = education, peace, freedom" and "Independence or death." Photo to the right shows demonstration at a Catholic Mass against Indonesian occupation in 1989. In the last decade a new generation has entered the struggle against Indonesian occupation.



ernor of East Timor from 1982 to 1992.

In November 1975 Fretilin issued a proclamation declaring East Timor an independent nation. A new government of 18 ministers, their average age under 30, was formed. Each minister vowed to "dedicate all my strength and knowledge to combat colonialism, imperialism, and all forms of domination and exploitation of men by men; to defend and promote the superior interests of the people of East Timor; to work to intransigently defend the integrity of the country and the unity of the nation of East Timor."

The imperialist powers, above all those in Washington, Canberra, and Wellington, New Zealand, fresh from their humiliating defeat in Vietnam, viewed the national liberation struggle in East Timor with unease. They portrayed the Fretilin victory as a "communist" threat, declaring that a "new Cuba" could not be allowed to emerge in the Asia-Pacific region.

The imperialists especially feared the impact on working people elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago, which former U.S. president Richard Nixon had described as "by far the biggest prize in the Southeast Asian area." In a 1965 speech, Nixon had advocated bombing North Vietnam as necessary for protecting the "immense mineral potential of Indonesia" for imperialist interests.

Indonesian president General Suharto, who had led the slaughter of up to 1 million Indonesian workers and peasants in 1965–66 with Washington's support, was a willing ally who shared the imperialists' fears. Together they worked to defeat the East Timorese struggle.

Imperialists back Suharto's invasion

In talks in Indonesia in September 1974, Australian prime minister Gough Whitlam told Suharto that Canberra would not oppose the incorporation of Portuguese Timor into the Indonesian republic.

When, a year later, Fretilin became the de facto administration of East Timor after its victory in the civil war, and with Indonesian troops staging incursions across the border from Indonesian West Timor, Canberra imposed a fuel blockade and banned aid shipments to the territory.

A full-scale Indonesian invasion of East Timor began on Dec. 7, 1975, only hours after U.S. president Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had finished meeting with Suharto in Jakarta. Canberra and Wellington were also part of the consultations with Jakarta that gave the signal to invade.

By April 1976, there were 35,000 Indone-

sian troops in East Timor. But the Indonesian regime and its imperialist backers underestimated the courage and determination with which the Timorese would fight for their country. Nearly two years after the invasion, Fretilin still controlled most of the rural areas, containing 80 percent of the population.

In September 1977, Indonesian forces, using Bronco OV 10 and F-16 warplanes supplied by Washington, began a massive operation against these unconquered zones, driving the population into concentration camps. It is estimated that in the first five years of the Indonesian occupation up to 200,000 East Timorese, a third of the population, were killed in the military terror or from resulting hunger and disease.

While many of Falintil's fighters were killed in this period, the survivors were able to regroup and continued to wage a popularly based guerrilla war against the Indonesian occupiers. Volunteers steadily joined its ranks. In 1997 it was estimated that the guerrillas numbered 600 to 800 full-time fighters, and 1,500 reserves.

For 24 years, the Australian, New Zealand, and U.S. governments have been the leading defenders of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor. Their armed forces regularly trained with those of Jakarta. U.S. military assistance to the Suharto regime doubled in the year following the invasion, and continued to increase as Jakarta's military terror deepened.

In 1985 Canberra officially recognized the annexation of East Timor as Indonesia's "27th province." One motive for this position was evidenced in 1989 when the Australian and Indonesian governments signed a treaty regulating the exploitation of oil deposits in the Timor Gap, a continental shelf area between northern Australia and the island of Timor.

For decades Australian imperialism had been greedily eyeing these deposits, estimated to be among the 20 richest in the world.

In 1975 the Australian ambassador in Jakarta had cabled his government that a deal over the oil "would be more easily negotiable with Indonesia rather than with Portugal or with an independent Portuguese Timor." The first field came into production in late 1998.

Since the 1980s the East Timorese resistance to Jakarta's rule has organized an underground network in the occupied towns and villages despite savage repression by the Indonesian military.

Indonesian military officers also set up businesses that exploited East Timor like a "milk-cow," monopolizing coffee, sandalwood, and marble. Discrimination against East

Timorese meant unemployment remained high, fueling opposition to Indonesian rule.

New generation joins struggle

That a new generation had taken up the struggle became apparent to the world in October 1989 when a group of young people staged a public protest calling for independence during the visit of Pope John Paul II to East Timor.

Young people were also in the forefront of the demonstration organized Nov. 12, 1991, at the funeral in Dili of 18-year-old Sebastiao Gomes, who had been shot by Indonesian police. As the march, initially numbering around 1,000, wound through the streets, thousands of Dili's residents joined in. At least 271

people died when Indonesian troops opened fire on what was the largest open display of pro-independence sentiment since the 1975 invasion.

East Timorese students studying in Indonesian universities also began to organize protests against the occupation of their country, and became a component of the student movement against the Suharto regime.

A coalition between Fretilin and

UDT leaders who had gone into exile was formed in Lisbon in March 1986. Today, Mario Carrascalao is part of the leadership of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), the umbrella group of pro-independence forces.

The president of the CNRT, Xanana Gusmao, the commander of Falintil, was imprisoned by Jakarta for more than six years after being captured by the Indonesian military. He was released September 7.

The landslide vote of 78.5 percent of East Timorese in favor of independence, in the August 30 UN-sponsored referendum, clearly demonstrated that, despite 24 years of brutal repression by the Indonesian military, backed by imperialism, the desire of East Timor's toilers to win their self-determination remains unbroken.

Terry Coggan is a member of the Engineers Union and is the Communist League candidate for Auckland Central in elections to parliament. Bob Aiken in Sydney, Australia, contributed to this article.

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By Joseph Hansen

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CORRECTION

An error was introduced in editing the article "Imperialist troops land in East Timor" that appeared in the October 4 *Militant*. The article incorrectly stated, "Troops in the Australian-commanded force will continue to wear their national uniforms, with blue helmets." The imperialist forces currently in East Timor are wearing national uniforms. A "peacekeeping" force of 12,000–15,000 wearing blue United Nations helmets is scheduled to be put in place after several months.

'Free the Puerto Rican political prisoners'

Continued from front page

many agricultural wage workers, was organized but quickly defeated by the Spanish military. The revolt in Puerto Rico, called Grito de Lares, was followed three weeks later by the Grito de Yara in Cuba, which launched a 10-year war for that nation's independence.

This year's Grito de Lares celebration was "the largest in the last 20 years" reported *El Nuevo Día*, one of Puerto Rico's largest dailies. Many estimated that more than 10,000 people streamed in and out of the plaza throughout the day. The cars backed up on the main roads leading into the town indicated as much.

Eric Jiménez, from the Orlando Committee to free the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners, came to Lares this year as he has for all but one of the last 18 years. "This is different," he said. "First of all, the groups are all together unlike in previous years when the Puerto Rican Independence Party [PIP] had their rally at one time and a separate rally was held another time." He went on to point out the rise in nationalism that he saw directly tied to the overwhelming support for the release of the political prisoners and the fight in Vieques. "There are many more youth this year than I've ever seen," he said.

'Navy out of Vieques!'

The U.S. military has used part of Vieques, a small island off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico, as a live fire range for decades. According to the Navy itself, in one 16-year period combat aircraft dropped 135,574 non-explosive bombs and 39,358 live ones on the 899 acre "live impact area" on Vieques. In those 16 years Navy warships fired 97,830 rounds from ships' 5-inch guns and millions of rounds of smaller rifle fire.

Since April 19 of this year, however, the Navy has suspended bombings on Vieques in the face of widespread public anger and protests. It was on that day that a Navy warplane dropped two 500-pound bombs on an observation post, killing 35-year-old Vieques resident David Sanes and wounding four others. Protesters quickly set up several makeshift camps in the restricted zone to deter the Navy from resuming its target practice.

Reports in the press the day of the Lares activities said that a special panel set up by U.S. president William Clinton to study the Vieques situation had called for resuming live-fire training, supposedly with a reduced number of bombs and fewer bombing days than the scheduled 180 per year. The report is said to call for the Navy to leave Vieques within five years, if the Pentagon can find a "suitable" alternative site.

Ismael Guadalupe, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques and a featured speaker at Grito de Lares, denounced this report. He explained that the fight for the freedom of Vieques was part of the fight to demilitarize all of Puerto Rico. "There are those who see the Navy ships as their fleet; our fleet is made up of the humble fishermen who block those ships," he declared.

Guadalupe warned that U.S. authorities may move to arrest those encamped on the Navy occupied territory on Vieques. To enthusiastic applause he said, "When the arrests start we have to be ready to mobilize.... This is for the liberation of all of



Top: Militant/Melanie Zimmer

More than 10,000 people rallied in Lares, Puerto Rico, September 23 to celebrate the anniversary of Puerto Rican call for independence — the "Grito de Lares" — issued on this day in 1868. Nationalist ferment marks the country today. "There are many more youth this year than I've ever seen," said one veteran campaigner for the freedom of the political prisoners.

Puerto Rico."

Many thousands of participants signed petitions saying they were committed to entering the Navy's restricted areas in solidarity with the several encampments there that are organized by unionists, fishermen, and members of the PIP.

Political prisoners cheered as heroes

Nine former political prisoners who had just been released under a "clemency" offer by the Clinton administration, are now living in Puerto Rico. They were invited as guests of honor at the Grito de Lares commemoration, but due to the onerous conditions put on their release by U.S. authorities they were unable to attend. A number of these independence fighters sent messages to the rally.

The crowd's sustained applause for each message showed that the ex-prisoners were heroes to those in attendance. The same was the case when messages were read from Antonio Camacho Negrón and José Solís Jordan, two of the six independence supporters who remains in jail in the United States. William Morales, an *independentista* who lives in Cuba, also sent a message. Morales escaped from a New York prison in the 1980s.

Former prisoner Elizam Escobar wrote that it was a difficult decision not to attend Grito de Lares, but they couldn't do it without being seen as breaking the Clinton administration's conditions of parole, which limit their right of

association.

Luis Rosa, another recently released political prisoner, called for the continued fight to free the remaining six prisoners. He said that those who came out of prison did so to continue the struggle. "Our fight is ongoing." He added, "We are with you in Lares and in Vieques."

A message from Edwin Cortés said that the conditions placed on him and the other prisoners demonstrated "colonial arrogance and racism against us." Ex-prisoner Adolfo Matos also sent a message to the rally.

Growth of nationalist consciousness

Barlaam Cintrón, a student from San Germán, had been at previous Lares celebrations. "This is better this year," he said, "because so many things have drawn people here. People still come here for tradition, but also for Vieques and the prisoners. The big majority of students are for getting the Navy out." On the prisoners, he said, "The U.S. government is trying to change peoples minds but we know they are fighting for freedom and aren't terrorists."

Ninety-one-year-old Puerto Rican nationalist Fernando Milán Suárez told the *Militant*, "There is a growth of consciousness in the youth, a proclamation of our sovereignty."

Another participant in Grito de Lares was Zenaida Rivera, a retired worker from the Electric Power Authority. Commenting on an article in the *Militant* about coal miners in

the U.S. fighting against company attacks on health coverage for retirees she said, "They are doing the same here."

She explained that her union, the electrical workers union UTIER, is in the process of negotiating a new contract and has been working for 22 months under the old one. The company is demanding that the new contract cut health benefits for retirees.

On September 21, UTIER called a 12-hour work stoppage and held an assembly where a strike authorization vote was unanimously approved. The vote authorizes the union leadership to call a strike at any time. UTIER has about 5,000 members. The company and the

union remain far apart on a number of issues, including wages. UTIER is fighting for a four-year contract with hourly raises of 84 cents the first year and 79 cents in the remaining years, with retroactive raises to May of 1998. The company is proposing a six-year contract with raises of 37, 43, and 49 cents every two years with no back pay.

Rivera said that during the 1998 strike by telephone workers opposed to the government privatizing the telephone company, which included a two-day island-wide general strike, she participated with her union in rallies, visited the picket lines, and made financial contributions.

The remarks of one of the last speakers got a warm response from many in the crowd. Marcos Díaz, the president of the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI) said of the Grito de Lares rally, "This is an advance." It is a show of strength following the telephone strike and the murder of David Sanes in Vieques, he said. "The Navy should leave the entire Caribbean. It's better that they never practice."

Díaz continued, "Today the colonizers are in crisis. Health care is a luxury. The police are more brutal. We need to organize ourselves everywhere until total liberation. Long live free Puerto Rico!"

Two of the biggest ovations at Grito de Lares were for the announcements that Lolita Lebrón and Rafael Cancel Miranda were present. They each spent a quarter-century in U.S. jails for their uncompromising fight for the independence of Puerto Rico.

Lebrón was quoted in the press as announcing the formation of an organization of women from different countries in the Americas to support the fight to get the Navy out of Vieques.

Ernie Mailhot is a member of the International Association of Machinists. Romina Green is a member of the Young Socialists. Elizabeth Stone and Ron Richards contributed to this article.

'Grito de Lares' celebrated in Chicago

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

CHICAGO — Some 75 people gathered at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center here September 23 to celebrate the recent release

of 11 Puerto Rican political prisoners and commemorate the 1868 *Grito de Lares* (Battle Cry of Lares), which marked the opening of the Puerto Rican struggle for independence from Spanish colonial rule.

Alberto Rodríguez, one of the former prisoners, addressed the gathering and called for a renewed campaign to win freedom for the remaining six *independentistas* imprisoned in the United States.

"I think Antonio Camacho, Oscar López, Juan Segarra Palmer, Haydée Beltrán, José Solís, and Carlos Alberto Torres are freedom fighters," Rodríguez declared. "They should all be here with us today. What we need to do next is talk about how to fashion a campaign that will get these other comrades out. "What's wrong with fighting for the freedom of Puerto Rico?" he asked, noting that the U.S. government has imprisoned independentista activists throughout the course of this century.

Today "the press denounces us as terrorists, demanding that we show remorse and renounce violence," Rodríguez continued. "But we are victims of [U.S.] colonialism, this keeps getting lost in the news media ... None of us are violent people. It was colo-

nialism that created the situation that made us resort to violence."

The September 23 program also featured the group Bomba-Aché, who through music and dance presented a review of Puerto Rican nationalist struggles against slavery and Spanish and U.S. colonialism.

"The FBI and government don't want you to hear this message," Cultural Center director José López told the gathering. "But the future is bright for our struggle," he continued, describing the large rally in Lares, Puerto Rico, that day and the unprecedented coverage of political debate around Puerto Rico in the daily news media in the United States.

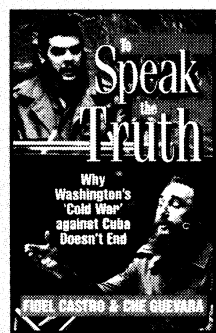
López presented the first copies of *Boricua*, a bilingual monthly newspaper. This first issue features extensive coverage of the fight to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques, reprints a speech by Puerto Rico Archbishop Juan González Nieves in favor of unconditional freedom for the political prisoners, and carries several pieces on art and culture.

Harvey McArthur is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union.

Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity

Interviews with Rafael Cancel Miranda

Cancel Miranda — one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979 — speaks out on the brutality of U.S. domination, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today. In English and Spanish. **\$3.00**

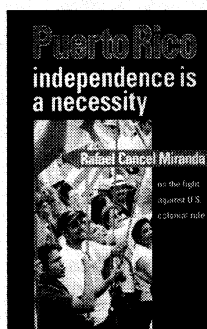


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Cubans at UN demand: End the U.S. economic war

Continued from front page

investments, and 74 percent of all telephone lines." In the United States, Sweden, and Switzerland there are 600 phone lines per 1,000 inhabitants, but Cambodia, Chad, and Afghanistan have only one line per 1,000 inhabitants, he noted.

Ballooning Third World debt

The Cuban leader pointed to the ballooning debt by Third World countries to international banks, which now stands at \$2 trillion and continues to grow. It is "devouring almost 25 percent of our export earnings just to cover interest payments. How is development possible under such circumstances?" he asked.

Under this crushing debt burden, the government of Tanzania, for example, spends nine times more on interest payments to imperialist bankers than on primary health care, and four times more than on primary education.

The Cuban leader denounced the imperialist governments' hypocritical campaign against the use of "small weapons." He asked, "Why is there no discussion in this hall about general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament? Why is the issue limited to controlling small arms, which are needed, for example, by Cuba, a country attacked and blockaded for 40 years? Why is there no mention of the deadly laser-guided bombs, the depleted uranium shells, or the cluster or graphite bombs used indiscriminately by the United States in Kosovo?"

Pérez Roque excoriated Washington and other imperialist powers for justifying its assaults on Yugoslavia and elsewhere on the basis that the right to national sovereignty no longer applies when those powers decide to unleash what they call a "humanitarian intervention."

The Cuban representative reiterated the revolutionary government's position that the United Nations Security Council setup, with each of five major powers holding veto power, is undemocratic. He called for an expansion of the council to include two or three new permanent members from Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

40 years of confronting U.S. aggression

Turning to the situation facing Cuba today, Pérez Roque pointed out that the aim of Washington's policy "is to destroy the political and economic system that the Cuban people have built by their own free will and to reestablish its neocolonial rule over Cuba, which that power lost forever on Jan. 1, 1959, with the triumph of the Cuban revolution."

Pérez Roque noted that the U.S. rulers reacted with hostility to the revolution from the start. The May 1959 agrarian reform law, through which hundreds of thousands of peasants gained land, "sparked an extreme reaction by the United States, whose companies owned a large part of the best and most fertile Cuban land." Washington soon launched its first attacks against the revolution, such as cutting off purchases of Cuban sugar.

More recently, the foreign minister explained, the U.S. government passed the Torricelli Act in 1992, and the Helms-Burton Act in 1996. These measures tighten the U.S. embargo in a number of ways, including sanctions against subsidiaries of U.S. corporations abroad and companies based in third countries that do business with Cuba. Since then, other measures have been tacked onto U.S. government budget appropriations bills that make it more difficult and costly for Cuba to obtain needed goods from other nations.

The U.S. Senate recently passed an amendment to a farm spending bill, sponsored by Sen. John Ashcroft, that would allow agricultural businesses and pharmaceutical companies to apply for one-year licenses from the U.S. president to sell their products to Cuba. The amendment includes several restrictions including a ban on the use of U.S. government loans in such sales. Approval of the measure remains in question, however, since a joint House-Senate conference committee has

stalemated on it.

Current U.S. policy allows licenses for sales of food and medicine to Cuba, but medical sales must be monitored by U.S. authorities and agricultural sales cannot be made through Cuba's state institutions, making trade virtually impossible.

Meanwhile, the Clinton administration is using the Helms-Burton law against its capitalist rivals in Europe. It is threatening sanctions against three European companies — Sol Meliá of Spain, the French-based Club Med, and the German firm LTU — on the basis that their hotels in Cuba are built on land claimed by a wealthy Cuban-American family whose vast landholdings were expropriated by Cuban peasants and workers decades ago.

Pérez Roque reported that Cuba's National Assembly had adopted a declaration September 13 that termed Washington's embargo "an international crime of genocide," citing international conventions that bar the deprivation of food for civilians in war. The declaration called for trying and punishing those U.S. officials responsible for carrying out the embargo.

The Cuban foreign minister described the civil lawsuit that several mass organi-

'It is possible to secure life with social justice in the world,' says Cuban leader

BY HILDA CUZCO

NEW YORK — Some 600 people attended a meeting here September 26 to hear Cuban foreign minister Felipe Pérez Roque, who was heading a delegation that had come to address the United Nations General Assembly and present a resolution against the U.S. embargo against Cuba. The event was held in the meeting hall of Local 1199 of the National Health and Human Service Employees Union.

Luis Miranda, president of Casa de las Américas, opened the meeting and introduced the first speaker, Hassán Pérez, national president of the Federation of University Students of Cuba (FEU). Casa de las Américas is a Cuban-American organization based in New York that supports the Cuban revolution.

Pérez in turn introduced the nine-member delegation seated on the stage that accompanied the foreign minister.

Three of them were leaders of Cuba's health-care system: Rosa Elena Simeón, director of the General Hospital of Havana; Tania González, director of the Salvador Allende hospital; and Pura Avilés, a surgeon and director of the main hospital in Holguín province.

Another three were leaders of different religious denominations: Raúl Suárez, a Baptist pastor and director of the Martin Luther Center in Havana; Odén Marichal, an Episcopal minister and president of the Council of Churches of Cuba; and Sergio Arce, a theologian and Presbyterian pastor from Matanzas. All six are elected deputies in the country's National Assembly.

The FEU president was accompanied by two other leaders of youth organizations: Roberto Conde, president of the Federation of High School Students (FEEM), and Niurka Duménigo, president of the Pioneers, the children's organization.

'We've seen the enemy's face up close'

Dr. Simeón, director of a 1,000-bed hospital in Havana, described the difficult conditions under which Cuban doctors, nurses, and hospital workers strive to maintain decent health care in face of shortages of medical supplies and other consequences of the U.S. embargo.

"We've seen the enemy's face up close," she said, describing the experience of "valuable equipment sitting idle for more than a year as we waited for spare parts." For example, some companies in nearby countries canceled sales of important equipment such



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Pickets at United Nations September 24 protest U.S. embargo against Cuba

zations in Cuba have filed in a Havana court against the U.S. government. The suit demands "reparations and compensation for losses and damages resulting from the 3,478 Cuban citizens who have died and the 2,099 survivors who have been left disabled as a consequence of the covert plots and dirty war waged by the United States" over the past four decades, from armed attacks to biological warfare and terrorist attacks on Cuba.

Pérez Roque introduced the nine members of the Cuban delegation accompanying him, including three national leaders of youth organizations, three prominent health-care professionals, and three religious leaders.

as pacemakers after the Helms-Burton law was passed, "so we have to buy them from other sources at 55 percent higher prices." It's through the resourcefulness and social consciousness of the doctors and workers trained by the revolution, along with initiatives by the country's leadership, that Cuba has been able to overcome obstacles and maintain health standards that are the highest in Latin America, she said.

"We've dared to be different — that's why we are attacked" by Washington, said Rev. Raúl Suárez. He pointed out that the Cuban revolution has survived despite the collapse of the Soviet bloc regimes and the tightening of the embargo.

Dennis Rivera, president of Local 1199, expressed his union's opposition to the U.S. embargo against Cuba, calling it "immoral." He recognized two other guests on the stage — Fernando Remírez, head of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., and Bruno Rodríguez, Cuban ambassador to the United Nations — and introduced foreign minister Pérez Roque.

Pérez Roque, 34, who was appointed three months ago, explained that in coming to address the United Nations, "We're not just interested in the affairs of Cuba, a small country with 11 million people, but in the affairs of the world, which has 6 billion inhabitants. This includes 5 billion people in underdeveloped countries who live in an unequal and unjust world.

"We refuse to accept this situation," he said. "Cuba maintains that, given the available resources in the world, it's possible to secure a dignified life with social justice for all the inhabitants of the planet."

"Today, the three richest people in the world own more wealth than the gross domestic product of the 48 poorest countries, with 600 million inhabitants," the Cuban leader stated. "Almost one billion people are hungry and more than 1.3 billion live in poverty, a testimony to the inhumanity of the prevailing system."

Illustrating the foreign debt trap that is bleeding dry the semicolonial world, Pérez Roque said, "A decade ago, the debt in Latin America stood at \$500 billion. During that time Latin America paid \$800 billion in interests. Yet today it owes \$800 billion."

Example of Cuban internationalists

In the midst of this worldwide crisis, Pérez Roque said, "Cuba's existence is a symbol." Pointing to the internationalism of the Cuban revolution, he said that "half a million

At the end of the General Assembly debate, in response to the foreign minister, U.S. deputy ambassador Peter Burleigh justified Washington's embargo against Cuba as a simple "trade ban" targeting the Cuban government for the alleged lack of human rights.

Hassán Pérez, president of the Federation of University Students (FEU), requested the floor to answer the U.S. representative. He pointed to opposition in the United States to Washington's embargo against Cuba, and added, "It's unheard-of that the biggest violator of human rights the world has ever seen can talk about human rights."

Cubans — many of them volunteer soldiers — have carried out missions of solidarity in the world" over the decades.

"Where did Cuban soldiers go? To fight against some democratically elected government? No. They fought apartheid's troops," he said, referring to the volunteer combatants that helped Angola beat back repeated South African invasions during the 1970s and 80s, leading to the defeat of the white minority regime's forces at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988-89.

After this victory, "we didn't stay in Africa as owners of mines or oil wells or land. We returned from southern Africa bringing back only the remains of our fallen comrades," Pérez Roque noted. This is in contrast with Washington and other imperialist powers that have intervened militarily in Africa to seize markets and influence.

"Today there are 2,000 youth from 18 countries in Latin America, mostly from low-income families, studying medicine in Havana," the foreign minister added. And "1,200 Cuban health-care volunteers, the majority of them doctors, are working in Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua." These volunteers mobilized in response to the devastation caused by hurricanes that swept through the Caribbean and Central America in late 1997. Brigades of volunteer doctors are now being sent to several countries in western Africa.

The example of these internationalist volunteers is what the U.S. government is trying to stamp out in its 40-year-long economic aggression against the revolution, Pérez Roque said.

The foreign minister highlighted the lawsuit filed in Havana by several mass organizations against the U.S. government, demanding \$181 billion in compensation for 3,476 Cubans who have died and 2,099 who have physical disabilities as a result of these attacks.

"The people of Cuba can distinguish very well between the people of the United States, who are not at fault," and the promoters of the U.S. embargo, Pérez Roque said, saluting those in the United States who have opposed Washington's hostile policies. "We want to normalize relations between the United States and Cuba. This must be done on the basis of ending the blockade.

"Cubans have a right to build the country they choose to build," he emphasized in his closing remarks. "With the conviction that victory lies in our resistance, Cuba will continue to defend what it believes in and build its future."

Oil workers respond to red-baiting attack

BY DEAN COOK

PASADENA, Texas — In this era of nostalgia, Crown Central Petroleum clamors to bring back the past. The red-baiting witch-hunts of the McCarthy era, that is.

Militant readers may be interested in the following exchange that appeared in the *Houston Chronicle* in August. I am one of the workers locked out by Crown Central Petroleum three years ago.

The head of Crown's corporate security, Edward M. Parker of Baltimore, recently flew down to Houston to meet with *Houston Chronicle* columnist L.M. "Woody" Sixel. As a result of that meeting, the *Chronicle* gave Crown a sounding board to air their witch-hunt via Sixel's August 13 column, "Is it revolution or just paranoia?"

Sixel writes that Crown is concerned that Houston has become a mecca for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and that I am using Crown to foment revolution in neighboring Pasadena, Texas. Parker contends that I do not want the lockout to end because it is part of a larger struggle against capitalism. (He got the last part right.)

Crown spokesperson Bruce Hicks finds it perplexing that people like the catfish workers from Mississippi and Black farmers from Georgia have been showing up at Crown picket lines. Hicks concludes that these "strange" people are showing up at the picket lines due solely to the SWP.

Hicks says Crown has been pilloried by demonstrations and they've had enough. He says Crown feels the need to speak out.

This need to speak out apparently does not include the need to speak the truth. Instead of talking about the real issues, like the real reason for the lockout, or who is truly responsible for prolonging the lockout, Crown would rather obscure the facts with rhetoric. They contend that I am somehow responsible for the longevity of the lockout and that my membership in the SWP is the root of the problem. But it has been the Crown workers, as a whole, that have rejected Crown's union-busting concessions.

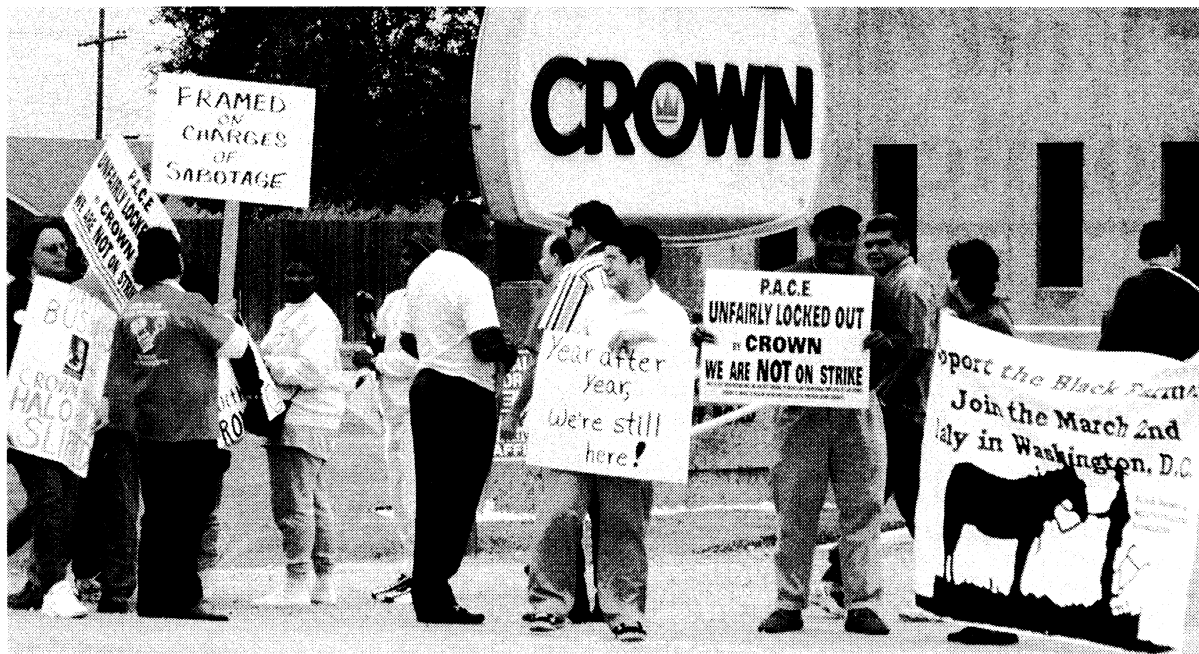
Regardless of my politics or my recent decision to join the Socialist Workers Party, I have only one vote. So then how do you explain the longevity of the lockout, or the fact that workers and farmers travel so far to join in the struggle. Could it be that we can think for ourselves? Could it be that we see our struggles as a common struggle against a common enemy? (Nah — that couldn't be it.)

The *Baltimore Business Journal*, in its August 23 issue, writes that the SWP has "infiltrated" the union at Crown. Quoting from Sixel's article, it repeats Crown's charges. Incidentally, the article is subtitled, "Workers of the world, unite!" (We're working on it.)

In both articles, it is noted that I, as well as other workers, have been attending meetings at the Pathfinder bookstore to talk about a range of issues from the lockout at Crown to the war in Kosovo. (Blasphemy!)

Crown had hoped their red-baiting would divide the workers and cause us to give up and go away. Crown had hoped that by "exposing" my socialist beliefs they could isolate me from the rest of the group.

This was a desperate act by a desperate



Militant/Mike Italie

Feb. 5, 1999, rally marks third anniversary of Crown lockout. Catfish workers, tire strikers, Black farmers fighting for their land and against discrimination, and others came to back oil workers.

company. Much like the civil lawsuit Crown has filed against the workers and their union. Crown has been taking depositions in their "sabotage" suit for more than a year, fishing for anything to use against us.

Is it coincidence that they launch this red-baiting scheme just before they schedule me for a deposition? Did their scheme work? Judging from the letters published in the *Chronicle* and conversations I've had with other locked-out workers, it did not.

Lockouts, lawsuits and frame-ups, and red-baiting campaigns—this is just a taste of what's to come. As the battles on the picket lines heat up, as the workers of the world unite, and as our unions grow stronger, so will the attacks against us. As you read this there are workers sitting in prison on trumped up charges because they would not give up the fight.

Is it revolution or just paranoia?

The following article appeared in the Aug. 13, 1999, issue of the *Houston Chronicle*. Copyright 1999 Houston Chronicle Publishing Company. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

BY L.M. SIXEL

HOUSTON IS HOME to former President Bush and a lot of right-wing political thinkers. But is it also a mecca of the Socialist Workers Party?

That's a concern of officials at Crown Central Petroleum Corp. The Baltimore refiner claims a local union leader who has protested the lockout at Crown's Pasadena refinery is using Crown to foment revolution.

Other union members, they contend, meet at a socialist bookstore each week to talk about causes ranging from Crown to opposing the war in Kosovo.

Those kinds of left-wing political leanings can be found in Madison, Wis., or Berkeley, Calif., but Pasadena, Texas?

It was admittedly strange, said Crown spokesman Bruce Hicks, when company

officials first learned that Dean Cook, a longtime Crown employee and one of the leaders of the lockout protest, is a member of the Socialist Workers Party. Hicks said other members of the union local also have attended party functions.

Cook couldn't be reached for comment, but union leaders say the union's protracted battle with Crown has nothing to do with worldwide socialism.

"That's nonsense," said a laughing Tom Gentry, president of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Local 4-227. "Heck, I haven't heard anyone preaching much revolution lately."

"I'm kind of tickled that some character from Crown with his foot on workers' necks is talking about a socialist revolution," Gentry said.

Verbal battles continue

While the two sides continue to try to negotiate a new agreement, they also continue to wage a war of words.

Crown long has portrayed the workers as something other than a local out for higher pay. When the refiner locked out its 260 workers three years ago in the midst of labor negotiations, it said it did so after what it believed to be acts of sabotage by employees.

The union has countered by saying Crown is guilty of a long list of ills from racial discrimination to violating pollution laws.

Hicks said the strangest people have showed up at the rallies by workers. The protesters at rallies to keep the lockout alive as a public issue have included union leaders representing catfish workers and black farmers.

"We couldn't figure out why the catfish farmers were showing up," Hicks said, but then it began to make sense: The link is the Socialist Workers Party.

Edward M. Parker, manager of corporate security for Crown, who flew from his office in Baltimore to discuss suspicions of the left-wing political activity in Pasadena, believes Cook doesn't really want to end the struggle at Crown because he sees it as part of a larger struggle against capitalism.

But Joe Drexler, director of special projects for the international PACE union in Nashville, Tenn., and leader of the refinery workers campaign against Crown, said Cook is no longer on the union's payroll and has no official role in the campaign.

Drexler said he is aware Cook has penned articles for the *Militant*, the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, but said he doesn't care if Cook is or isn't a party member. After all, it's not illegal.

Drexler added that he isn't in contact with unions representing workers in catfish processing plants or black farmers.

Sarah White, a service representative for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 1529 in Indianola, Miss., laughed when asked if members of the Socialist Workers Party have a presence in the union representing catfish workers.

"The who?" she asked.

Unusual tactics

It's unusual for a company to launch a public offensive, as Crown has done. Normally in a situation where both the company and the union have filed lawsuits against one another, the company avoids any comment.

But in this case, Hicks said Crown feels the need to speak out.

"We've been pilloried by lawsuits and we've been pilloried by demonstrations," he said. Initially, Crown ignored the union's campaign, but "we've had enough," Hicks said.

To the union, though, Crown's remarks suggest it's feeling the sting on the union's campaign.

Crown wouldn't be harking back to the witch hunts from the 1950s, Drexler said, if the company wasn't feeling some pressure.

Crown workers reply to article

Below are some of the letters published in the *Houston Chronicle* August 25 responding to the red-baiting attack on the union.

In response to the charges made by the representatives of Crown Central Petroleum as reported in L.M. Sixel's Aug. 13 column ("Is it revolution or just paranoia?"): The lockout of 252 workers at Crown's Pasadena refinery has been ongoing for over three years. Workers did not provoke this lockout and we don't have the power to end or extend it.

Because we would not concede to the outrageous concession demands made during contract negotiations, Crown decided to lock us out. Then, to turn up the heat, they accused the workers of sabotaging the refinery.

The very next day, the same company that locked us out invited us back to work - but only if we signed their proposed contract. We did not go back. We could not accept a contract that did away with our seniority, gave 40 percent of our jobs to contractors and gave Crown the right to contract out the remaining jobs whenever it pleased them. Crown is waging a war against the union.

Regarding the "strange people" showing up at our picket lines: We don't see it as strange when other workers travel hundreds of miles to join our struggle. In fact, we appreciate others participating in our picket lines as part of the growing resistance to management attacks on wages, benefits and our rights as human beings.

Finally, my affiliation with any particular political organization is not the real issue here. The issue is that Crown wanted to crush its workers and their union with this lockout, but their attempt failed. We would not just give up and go away.

Dean Cook
Deer Park

Regarding the charges made by representatives of Crown Central Petroleum in L.M. Sixel's Aug. 13 column, I do not see why Crown officials feel the need to point out the political leanings of one member of the locked-out union, unless it is part of an attempted smear campaign. So Dean Cook is a member of the Socialist Workers Party.... How many union members are Democrats? Republicans? Libertarians? How many voted for Ross Perot? This is a democracy and people are free to join any political party they choose.

Crown is afraid that bad public relations decisions and boycotts are having an effect on the only thing that Crown officials truly care about — their own wallets.

Patrick A. Pierce,
Deer Park

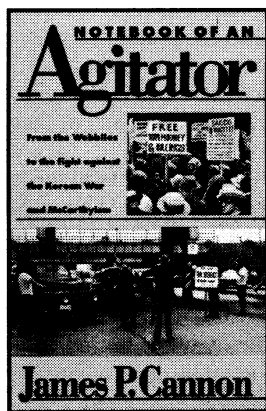
I am one of the locked-out workers at Crown Central Petroleum and I would like to respond to L.M. Sixel's Aug. 13 column. No one person's political persuasion caused the lockout and not a one of us who are locked out are standing in the way of its end.

We did not invent the fact that Crown disregards the health and safety of the community and the environment, nor that it routinely discriminates against women and minorities at its Pasadena refinery. On the other hand, Crown did invent the idea that workers sabotaged the refinery that afforded us and our families a decent livelihood.

You can call it capitalism if you want to, but it looks like greed and union-busting to me.

B.J. Case,
Bacliff

from Pathfinder



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US Airways workers discuss contract offer

BY REBECCA ARENSON
AND NANCY COLE

PHILADELPHIA — Maintenance workers at US Airways are discussing a tentative concessionary contract that averted a nationwide strike set to begin September 26. Union meetings are planned to discuss the proposed agreement, a week before the October 5 vote. If the contract is rejected, a strike by 7,000 members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) is set to begin 48 hours later.

While the signing bonus is increased and the pay raise upped from 3.5 percent to 6 percent, most of the concessions that led workers to reject the company's contract offer by 75 percent in July remain intact. The proposed percentage of part-time utility (cleaners) has shifted slightly from 35 percent per station to one-third of full-time workers per shift, excluding third shift. But these new workers could work as many hours as full-time workers through trades and overtime, but with part-time status and benefits.

"Thirty three percent part-time is a strike issue — one is too many," commented Ken Messersmith, a fleet service worker in Pittsburgh. Fleet service — that is ramp and catering workers — fought to reduce the percentage of part-time during their five-year-long negotiations for a contract, which was approved earlier this year.

Mandatory overtime for deicing is still a part of this proposal, cushioned by a list of "compelling reasons" management may consider in excusing workers from staying.

And "pay parity" remains, tying future pay adjustments to a formula based on wages at US Airways's major competitors. The parity scam ensures that the immediate 6 percent raise would be the only one over the five-year life of the proposed contract. It has been four and a half years since the last pay increase.

Will Brundage, a cleaner in Philadelphia, started work at US Airways more than two

years ago. Under the new proposal he would make \$9.04 an hour until next July. "Why do they think we can work a job that pays \$9 an hour after two years?" he asked. A decade ago cleaners starting out at US Airways made just under \$11 an hour; with this new proposal, it would be \$8.30.

Mechanics at the top of the pay scale would make \$24.36 under the proposed agreement, in addition to increases in hourly premiums for the licenses they hold. This has prompted some of them to look favorably on the agreement, avoiding the serious concessions that it presents for all 7,000 workers covered under the contract. Others view this differently. "They're gearing this contract toward mechanics," said Mac Ford, a mechanic in Philadelphia. "I don't think we should allow part-time to come in. They're trying to turn mechanics and utility against each other."

Leading up to the September 26 strike deadline, which came at the end of the 30-day cooling off period mandated by federal law, workers here began to get a feel for the kind of united fight possible. Even the pro-business *Wall Street Journal* took note of what the carrier was up against in their September 21 article headlined, "US Airways Ramp Workers May Honor Looming Strike by Carrier's Mechanics." The article pointed to the sharp difference between this possible strike and the only other one ever at US Airways, the four-day walkout in 1992, when the company reportedly operated 55 percent of its flights.

"Now, however, the 6,200 ramp workers have an IAM contract that gives them the right to honor a legal strike by other workers. The IAM has \$126 million in its strike fund. The 10,000 customer-service agents now are members of the Communications Workers of America." And the flight attendants, the article continues "may have political reasons for supporting a mechanics' walkout" because they have been in negotiations for more than

Protesters in Miami demand justice for Black youth killed by cop



Militant/Rollande Girard
Several hundred people rallied September 27 in Miami against police killing of an unarmed 19-year-old Black man, Antonio Butler, on September 20. Juan Méndez, the cop who shot Butler in the back, had been involved in three fatal shootings since 1984. Protesters demanded the firing of Méndez and Miami police chief William O'Brien.

three years. The article concludes with a quote from a travel agent about a possible strike: "If US Air goes down, the whole Northeast will go into extreme turmoil. It will be a disaster."

Even though the IAM strike deadline was averted September 26, the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), representing 8,300 members at US Airways, went ahead with special meetings scheduled in its base cities to discuss support for a possible maintenance strike.

The AFA marked 1,000 days without a contract September 27 with informational picketing and leafleting in their base cities on the East Coast. "We made sacrifices for the airline in bad times. Now that US Airways is making billions, we want our fair share," explained a bright green flyer headlined, "CHAOS Could be Coming to US Airways." CHAOS — Create Havoc Around Our System — is a "strike action that could take many forms" after flight attendants are released for a 30-day cooling off period if there continues to be no progress in negotiations.

In Pittsburgh, 150 flight attendants picketed at the airport terminal and three other ticket counters in the city. Airport officials tried to limit the action to five pickets in a small area, but dozens of other AFA members walked around the ticketing area in fluorescent green T-shirts with "CHAOS" across the front. Similar actions took place in Charlotte; Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia; and several other cities. At the Philadelphia airport, some 25 flight attendants chanted and distributed flyers to passengers. Their signs called for better working conditions and pay, and warned: "Without a contract, will you get there?"

Rebecca Arenson and Nancy Cole are members of the IAM at US Airways in Philadelphia. IAM member Dave Welters in Pittsburgh contributed to this article.

Chrysler contract: no advance for auto workers

BY JOHN SARGE

DETROIT — Two days after the September 14 expiration of the national contract between the UAW and the Big Three auto companies, negotiators for the union and DaimlerChrysler (DCX) announced they had reached a tentative agreement. The contract covers 75,000 union members at 50 locations across the United States. It is expected to set the framework for agreements at auto giants Ford and General Motors, as well as at the newly formed Delphi Automotive Systems, GM's parts operation. The combined unionized workforce of these companies is almost 400,000.

Union officials and the auto bosses kept the terms of the DCX contract secret for four more days. The union only released the contents of the contract after briefing local UAW officials in Detroit on September 20. The 24-page union-prepared summaries of the pact began reaching workers six days after the settlement announcement. UAW officials announced that the contract was ratified by a large majority of the workers voting between September 24 and 26.

While the *Wall Street Journal* calls this agreement "one of the industry's richest in years," some auto workers see it differently. Richard Young, a worker with 32 years at the company and a member of UAW Local 110 at DCX's Fenton, Missouri, van assembly plant, described the contract as "pretty much the same as we've gotten in the past. It's no different: not super-good but not a bad contract."

Yvette Richardson, another member of Local 110, summed up many auto workers attitudes. "We didn't lose anything," she said.

The UAW-prepared summary reports that union members will receive raises and will continue to be covered under a cost-of-living allowance, with a slightly improved formula to offset the effects of inflation. There is a \$1,350 signing bonus and a Christmas bonus of up to \$600. Pension increases for both active and retired workers and other benefit improvements are reported.

The agreement includes provisions that supposedly limit the company's ability to cut its workforce and what the summary described as a "plant closing and sale moratorium." While "job security" language has

been included in earlier contracts the auto bosses have slashed thousands from their payrolls and there are no indications that the announced program is any different.

This contract gives workers a 3 percent increase in each year of the contract, a first in the auto industry in 20 years, when lump sum payments replaced pay increases many years. But it is longer than the three years or less that has been the tradition in the UAW-Big Three agreements since the 1950s.

It is a four-year deal that limits union members' ability to improve their conditions. Production workers with three years or more seniority presently earn around \$21 an hour including the cost-of-living allowance. New workers start at 70 percent and receive a

5 percent raise every six months.

This contract freezes the situation established over the last 20 years of concession contracts in which the national agreement settles the financial questions of the contract while job conditions, health and safety, and other working conditions are decided on by local agreement.

Jim Garrison, another Local 110 member, said, "Unlike the situation at Boeing, there has been no discussion of the bosses trying to impose some new work rules (that I am aware of). That would have generated a lot of discussion and strong views. All eyes are on the local agreement, really, and that is yet to come."

At the company's Warren, Michigan, truck

Continued on Page 12

Roof cave-in kills two miners in Ohio

BY JAMES VINCENT

CLARINGTON, Ohio — A roof cave-in killed two union coal miners and injured two other miners at the Powhatan No. 4 mine in Southeast Ohio. The two dead workers were identified as William Florence, 49, and Gerald Eble, 56. Both workers were members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

The miners were working 700 feet underground when the roof collapsed September 24. According to union officials investigating the accident, the miners were killed while removing drainage pipes. No more details were provided. The cause of the accident is being investigated by the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration and the Ohio Division of Mines and Reclamation.

The mine, once one of the largest in the state, had been closed since May. A small maintenance crew had been working to close down the mine. Most of the 178 miners who worked there have been laid off.

The news of the miners' deaths traveled quickly through the coalfields. It was front page news in the area newspapers and the lead story on the TV and radio.

Powhatan No. 4 is owned by Consolidated Coal, the largest underground coal producer in the country and the fourth-largest U.S. coal company. In the past year, Consolidated Coal

has cut back production, including closing and idling several mines in southwestern Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky. This has resulted in hundreds of layoffs. In

late August, Consolidated gave notices of lay-off to nearly 400 union miners at its nearby Shoemaker Mine in Marshall County, West Virginia.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Upcoming Labor and Farm Actions

Sat.-Sun., October 2-3

One Year Anniversary Rallies to Back Locked-out Kaiser Aluminum Workers

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

Rally 2 p.m. October 2 at Trentwood Local Union, 14015 E. Trent Ave.

For more information, visit

www.USWA329.org

NEWARK, OHIO

Rally 11 a.m. October 3 at Frontier Ranch on York Rd, 10 miles west of Newark

For more information call:

(740) 928-4494 or (614) 888-6784

Sat., October 2

The Struggle for Justice

Continues:

Second Anniversary of Steel-

workers Lockout in Pueblo, Colorado

11 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Bessemer Park,

800 W. Northern Ave., Pueblo

For more information call: (710) 566-9056.

Sat., October 16

March for Immigrants' Rights

Washington, D.C. — Assemble 10 a.m. at

Malcolm X Park. For more information

call: (212) 473-3936 or 633-7108.

Sat., October 16

Rally and March for Justice for Max Antoine

Irvington, New Jersey — Join protest at noon to demand justice for Max Antoine, brutally beaten by cops. At Irvington Police Station, 1 Civic Plaza. For more information call: (201) 487-1531.

Farmers are hit hardest by N. Carolina flood

Continued from front page

and 2.4 million chickens, 500,000 turkeys, and 100,000 hogs were killed.

One of the towns worst hit by the flooding was Princeville, located 15 miles east of Rocky Mount and right next to Tarboro. It was built in the 1960s on bottom land created when a new dam was built. The town was intentionally flooded when the floodgates were opened as the river rose from the hurricane-carried rains, but residents were only given a few minutes notice. The entire town has remained under water for more than 10 days.

Griffin Todd, Jr. a farmer from Zebulon, North Carolina, just west of where the flooding hit, told the *Militant* he has been to Princeville twice bringing food and clothing collected through his church, and is planning

to go again. "Princeville is an all-Black town. Many of the people there work in a nearby Bayer plant," he said. "It is completely under water and they will have to rebuild. The people now are staying in schools and moved in with kinfolk."

Andre Richardson, a farmer from Johnston County, also west of the flooded area, has also been helping the people from Princeville. "Some of the hog containment lagoons that broke in the flooding were located right near Princeville. And that waste along with the dead cows and hogs means they will need a lot of cleanup in order to rebuild," he said in a phone interview.

The destruction of massive hog waste lagoons in the flooding confirmed years of warnings by opponents of the massive hog

confinement operations. In Duplin County, 2 million gallons of hog waste spilled when a lagoon ruptured in Rose Hill and flowed into a tributary of the northeast Cape Fear River. And hog lagoons in Sampson and Pitt counties overflowed from the heavy rain.

In a September 28 editorial titled "A bleak Harvest," the *Raleigh News and Observer* lectured, "Those [hog farmers] who do rebuild must not, under any circumstances, put their new hog houses and waste holding ponds in flood plains."

Immigrant workers, most of them from Mexico, are the backbone of agricultural labor in eastern North Carolina. These workers have been especially hard hit. Some live in camps without transportation or telephones.

And there have been reports that immigrant workers have been turned down for emergency food stamps because they do not have Social Security cards, even though the cards are not required to receive aid.

Before the hurricane, farmers were already in bad trouble. Agricultural products are at very low prices. Todd, for example, said soybeans sell for about \$4.65 a bushel now, compared with \$10 a bushel 10 years ago. Tobacco is \$1.48 a pound now compared with \$1.90 last year. And this year the growing season went from six weeks of drought to getting all the rain at one time.

Some farmers have some insurance, but in most cases it will cover only a tiny part of their losses from the flood. Disaster relief programs set up by the state and federal governments offer minimal and distorted help. Loans, even at very low interest rates, drive farmers even further into debt, the last thing many farmers want. And the history of discrimination in the disaster relief programs has been well-documented by farmers for years. The rich farmers always get the lion's share of the aid.

Richardson, who is one of the few Black farmers in Johnston County, said that in all the years he has been farming, he has never received a disaster loan or grant after other cases of drought and flooding, while neighboring farmers who were white did get the help. "They always said they had run out of funds when I got there."

Chrysler agreement no advance for workers

Continued from Page 11

plant, a member of UAW Local 140 with 27 years seniority who asked that his name not be used said, "This agreement is designed for guys like me, waiting to retire. We make up 50 percent of the workforce so they figure it will be approved. They improved the pensions to get us to leave. As we go so do the

good jobs. The young workers coming in will never make 30 years, their bodies won't take it," given the speedup in recent years.

Shifting the question of conditions to local agreements allows the bosses more latitude in their productivity drive. The union is weakened because much smaller numbers of workers face the auto barons as they demand more speedup. As they win concessions in one location the bosses then whip saw one local against another.

While some local unions have prepared to confront the bosses from the start of talks in June, national union officials made few preparations to strike the auto makers. Indefinite contract extensions, which can be ended by either side, were granted to Ford and GM on September 13. Then as talks reportedly became stalemated, with only hours before the expiration, workers were urged to walk out of two St. Louis area plants. A little over an hour later workers at three plants in the Indianapolis area walked out. As soon as some progress was reported the contract was extended and union officials ordered the strikers back to work.

Garrison described what happened in the St. Louis South Plant where he works, next to the van plant in Fenton. "My afternoon shift co-workers reported that the word came down the line that we were going out and we left. But by the time the day shift got there the pickets were gone. We didn't know what was happening so we started to return to work. There was so much confusion that it took management about three hours to start the line."

The *Detroit Sunday Journal*, a weekly newspaper published by locked-out Detroit newspaper workers, reported that the decision on the strikes "came from inside the bar-

gaining room," and that the strikes were ended "shortly after midnight." The last national UAW strike against an auto maker was a 12-day strike against Chrysler, predecessor to DCX, in 1986.

Union officials also hailed a "new letter on corporate neutrality" that gives the UAW "limited access" to non-union employees. The union has been trying to organize non-unionized DCX plants. There is an ongoing drive at the nonunion Mercedes plant in Vance, Alabama. The union leaders hope this letter will aid them in winning a majority of the Alabama workers to the union. The UAW has failed in a similar drive recently at Honda Motors in Ohio.

The union announced a tentative agreement with GM and Delphi September 28. While the terms have not been released, press reports indicate it follows the DCX pattern with clauses allowing Delphi workers to return to GM as openings occur. Union officials have made it clear they want to postpone talks with Ford until the other agreements are signed because the number-two auto maker is planning to either spin off or sell its Visteon parts operation with 23,500 union workers. Reports of these plans have sparked anger and discussion among UAW members at Ford.

In a related development the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) announced a tentative agreement with Ford in Canada on September 21, which was ratified on September 26. The agreement is similar to the contract between the UAW and DCX except that it has a three-year duration.

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 at Ford in Wayne, Michigan.

The Cuban Revolution Today!

Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, has traveled to Cuba frequently over the last 20 years, returning recently from having visited this past September. Author of a number of books including *Che Guevara and the Imperialist Reality* and *Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution*, as well as acting as editor for the *Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara* and *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's Cold War Against Cuba Doesn't End*, Waters will provide an inside look at the current state of both feminism and Marxism in Cuba at the turn of the millennium.

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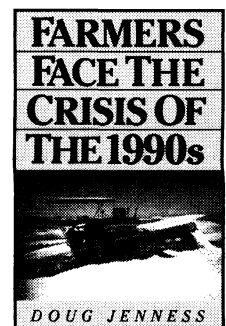
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Buchananism: what it is and how to fight it

The following is a section titled "Buchananism: What it is and how to fight it" from "Capitalism's deadly world disorder," a talk by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes. The talk was presented April 10, 1993, to participants in a regional socialist educational conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the following day to a similar gathering in Des Moines, Iowa. Barnes reported decisions of a meeting the previous weekend of the SWP

from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

National Committee, youth leaders of the SWP, and leaders of communist leagues in several other countries. The entire presentation is published as the third chapter of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Barnes (see front-page ad). It is copyright © Pathfinder Press. The excerpt is reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

At the June 1991 Socialist Workers Party convention, where we assessed how communist workers had responded to the challenge of Washington's war against Iraq, we also began taking a closer look at another aspect of the accelerating political polarization in the United States and other imperialist countries.

In the opening political report to that convention, I pointed out that given the relative prosperity and social stability that had prevailed in most imperialist countries for almost four decades following World War II, it had become easy for most working people to think that the spectrum of politics runs from liberal to conservative, all within a normal bourgeois parliamentary framework. But as crisis conditions ripen under capitalism, the true political spectrum changes: it begins first to encompass incipient fascist organizations — with one foot in and one foot out of the spectrum of normal bourgeois politics — and then a developing fighting workers vanguard.

It is wrong to think of fascism as an extension of bourgeois conservatism. Fascist currents do originate, in part, within the right wing of existing bourgeois parties under crisis conditions, but they are not simply an extension of two-party politics as we have known it for the past few decades. They are *radical* movements that base themselves on the popular grievances of increasingly economically insecure and devastated small business people, other middle-class and professional layers, and sections of the working class. They are *street action* movements in their trajectories.

American fascism

Sometime in 1990, Patrick Buchanan — a former speech writer and aide in the Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan White Houses, and a newspaper columnist and talk-show host — had issued a second edition of his autobiographical political tract, *Right from the Beginning*. I had picked up a copy of the book and started reading it, and I brought a copy with me to the convention that year. That was very much on my mind as I took some time in the report to begin raising the connection between the deepening social crisis we had been living through, the opening guns of renewed interimperialist conflicts, and the inevitable emergence of incipient fascist currents and demagogues in the United States and other imperialist countries.

I had been struck in particular by a chapter in Buchanan's book entitled, "As We Remember Joe," a nostalgic account of why his father had held Senator Joseph McCarthy in such high esteem. Among the other family heroes, Buchanan explains, were General Francisco Franco, leader of the fascist forces during the Spanish civil war in the late 1930s, and right-wing U.S. general Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur was the commander of U.S. forces in Korea who pressed for an invasion of China even after the U.S. rulers, despite their initial plans, concluded in their majority that this would be a fiasco. To understand why people such as his father admired these ultrarightist figures, Buchanan

wrote, "is to begin to understand not only his generation but ours."

In the early 1950s, Buchanan said, America was "ready for Joe McCarthy's boisterous, bellowing call for the overthrow of its reigning establishment." The "war of legitimacy that Joe launched had undertones . . . of class warfare," Buchanan said. Behind the controversy around McCarthy "were warring concepts of morality, of legitimacy, of patriotism," he said. "Who is the legitimate moral authority in America? Who, by conviction, background, character, and belief, should rightly determine the destiny of the Republic, and which is the illegitimate usurper, incompetent to identify and protect America's true interests from her real enemies?" (Notice how "communists" are absent here as direct targets!)

In November 1991 Buchanan announced his intention to wrest the Republican nomination for president from George Bush. We immediately began campaigning to explain the true political significance of Buchanan's announcement. What most of the big-business media was initially treating as a side-show inside the Republican Party, we said, was not at all funny. It was not idiosyncratic. Instead, it marked a revival for the first time since McCarthy of a demagogic ultrarightist strand in bourgeois politics in the United States — a strand that would eventually spill over into the streets, and that would not go away until the fate of humanity was decided in struggle in those same streets.

By early 1992 a few bourgeois commentators were beginning to take seriously what Buchanan was setting out to do. One example was an article by conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer that had been run in the March 1 issue of the *Washington Post* and syndicated in daily papers throughout the United States. He had written that the central problem with Buchanan is not his anti-Semitism — which several other commentators had accurately pointed to — nor various other of his particular reactionary views. (Krauthammer cataloged some of these: Buchanan's exhortations against "a morally cancerous welfare state"; his racist alarm bells about the "flood tide of immigration"; his warning that "white Americans will be a minority by 2050"; his question, "Who speaks for the Euro-Americans?"; his hero-worship of Franco and the butcher of Chile, Gen. Augusto Pinochet; and his euphemistic reference to the apartheid regime in South Africa as "the Boer republic.")

"The real problem with Buchanan," Krauthammer wrote, is that his views are "in various and distinct ways, fascistic."

That bald characterization of the Buchanan campaign marked a new departure in the respectable daily press in the United States. Until then, the big-business media had been doing their best to slide over the fact that a fascist program was being advanced as a "legitimate" perspective within the two-party system by one of the leading contenders in the 1992 presidential primaries. But Krauthammer's characterization was correct, as far as it went. Buchanan's "America First" demagoguery is indeed not only a variety of an incipient American fascism, but the most prominent organizing center for it today.

But fascism is a special kind of extreme nationalist movement, something that Krauthammer, as an apologist for capitalism, did not and could not explain. A fascist movement above all seeks to mobilize the emotional energies of masses of people who hate the liberal capitalist democracy that is failing so horribly but can find no way forward to replace it with something historically progressive.

We called this new development in U.S. politics "Buchananism." And we printed a special issue of the *International Socialist Review* supplement to the *Militant*, headlined, "Buchananism: What It Is and How to Fight It," that supporters of the Socialist Workers Party presidential ticket of James Warren and Estelle DeBates sold thousands of copies of last year as a central piece of campaign literature. We joined with others around the country in picketing events where Buchanan was proselytizing for his reactionary cause.

Incipient fascist movements, demagogic "popular" ultrarightist movements, are often identified with an individual: McCarthyism ("Nixonism" would have served as well at the time), Huey Longism, Father Coughlinism, and there are many more examples from

the United States and other countries. It is useful to note this fact, to show the variety of forms rightist movements can take and where they come from. The individuals or "movements" such currents are named after are accidental. They have no scientific ideas, or materialist analysis of the crisis of capitalism. But they do have a real "solution" to offer desperate and resentful people.

While Buchanan keeps one foot firmly planted in "normal" bourgeois politics, he at the same time appeals to those who will increasingly seek to function outside that framework and to fight in the streets to impose radical solutions to stop the descent into a "new Sodom." In the Buchanan phenomenon, we could see a pincers movement: one flank came out of the "respectable" Republican Party, including the middle-class areas of Washington, D.C., where Buchanan himself was born and reared. It converged with the cowards trying to block the abortion clinics, with the thugs who simply put the white sheets aside for a while, with all those attracted to taking out their insecurity and hatred against sections of the working class.

Buchanan's hero, Joseph McCarthy, also set out to galvanize a fascist movement in the United States in the aftermath of World War II. And right-wing presidential campaigns were organized in 1964 by Republican candidate Barry Goldwater and in 1968 by Gov. George Wallace of Alabama. But none of these figures arose in conditions of an economic and social crisis that was bound to get worse. None arose in depression-like conditions under which the radical social demagoguery and aggressive nationalism necessary to inspire a cadre would have enabled a mass fascist movement to get organized and grow...

You'll sometimes see Buchanan referred to in the bourgeois press as an "isolationist," or "antiwar." He opposed U.S. government



Protest against rightist politician Patrick Buchanan in Tucson, Arizona, Feb. 22, 1996.

policy during the Gulf War and speaks out against committing U.S. troops to the United Nations military operation in Bosnia. But class-conscious workers could make no more deadly mistake than failing to recognize — and to act on — the political fact that Buchananism is part of the imperialist war drive today.

Buchanan will mobilize the rightist movement he is building to demand that Washington use *all* its military might to back "our boys." But he's determined to first win the war *at home* against the working class, to hamstring *us*, and he urges his followers to act in the image of his heroes, Franco, MacArthur, and McCarthy. That's a precondition to *really do the job*, Buchanan holds, but then America has to do it!...

The workers movement must explain that capitalism is the source of the crisis; it must organize the toilers in a revolutionary struggle to take power out of the hands of the exploiters and establish a workers and farmers government. It must present convincing answers, a working-class alternative, to the demagoguery of the Buchanans and the others. Because if labor does not do so — if it offers those being crushed by the capitalist crisis no effective way to fight, and then seems to flub the chances we have to win — we will shove potential class allies into the hands of the rightists. And the working class will be divided and defeated in blood.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



October 11, 1974

NEW YORK — Chanting "Stop Killer Cops," and "We want Bosco," 600 people held a rally and demonstration in the city hall area Sept. 25 against police brutality. The demonstration was called to demand that Frank Bosco, the policeman who gunned down 14-year-old Claude Reese, be indicted for murder. Reese was brutally slain Sept. 15 in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn while helping to clean out a basement for a surprise birthday party for a friend.

Many of those at the rally were youths in their teens who had come by chartered bus from Brownsville. The young people went to the rally rather than attend school, as a means of showing solidarity against the police murder of Claude Reese.

A boycott of all stores in Brownsville along Pitkin and Belmont Avenue was also called for the day of the rally. Most of the merchants responded to the sentiment of community activists by closing their shops.

The Brooklyn Militant Forum held a meeting Sept. 28 on the "Fight Against Police Terror." Speaking at the forum were Derrick Morrison, SWP candidate for governor; Brother Hekima of the Newark Congress of African People, Omowale Clay of the Committee for Justice for Clifford Glover, and Ray Whitfield of the Committee for Justice for Claude Reese.

"Equal justice under the law," declared Morrison, "does not exist in reality. There is one standard of justice for the rich and

another for Black and other oppressed people. In order to get justice there must be struggle and mobilizations. This has been the lesson of every defense case, from that of Sacco and Vanzetti to Angela Davis."



October 10, 1949

PITTSBURGH, Oct. 3 — The steel workers here, to a man, walked off the job on Friday night, shutting tight every steel mill, rolling mill and plant in the area. Their attitude is one of calm confidence. Believing that the companies are aiming to break their union, the strikers are firmly resolved to remain out until U.S. Steel and the other giants of the industry feel the might of American labor. They are confident that the working class fully supports them and confident of their own strength — a confidence born of previous victories over the arrogant steel corporations.

The cash reserves of steel workers were depleted during the 60-day "cooling-off" period agreed to by Philip Murray. While Murray played around with Truman and his "fact-finding" board, U.S. Steel struck blow after blow at the workers; men worked at an average of three or four days a week; union militants were weeded out, with Murray's help; elder men eligible for pensions, were indiscriminately laid off. Some of these older men, with 20 to 30 years on the job, fear that they will be forced by the company to take physical examinations before returning to work or getting pensions.

No to Moscow's war on Chechnya!

Moscow's anti-Islamic campaign against the peoples of Caucasus, now escalating with its bombing of Chechnya and military assault on rebels in neighboring Dagestan, is a blow to the interests of working people everywhere.

It's not surprising that the Clinton administration and big-business press quietly cheer the Yeltsin regime's bombing campaign, while fretting that it will backfire. The capitalist rulers in Washington and elsewhere hope Moscow will do their dirty work by suppressing the rebellious peoples of the Caucasus who chafe under second-class status.

The crisis in the Caucasus confirms that the collapse of the Soviet and Eastern European Stalinist regimes a decade ago represented a defeat for U.S. imperialism. For decades the imperialist rulers, unable to overthrow the workers state in the USSR, pressed the bureaucratic government there to police working people. But under the impact of the world capitalist crisis in the 1980s, the Stalinist apparatus shattered as workers and farmers began to resist attacks on their living standards and social rights. This has become a nightmare for Washington, London, and their fellow sharks. It is increasingly clear that the former Soviet Union is not moving toward capitalism, much less toward a stable democratic capitalism.

More and more, the imperialist powers will be forced to take on working people in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union with their own military forces in order to shore up their declining imperial order, as they have done with the savage NATO bombing war against the workers state in Yugoslavia.

Moscow, a regime based on permanent instability, is lashing out against Chechnya from growing weakness.

Massive flood relief now!

Continued from front page

ening the screws on those they exploit. The wealthier farmers who employ wage labor tend to live on higher ground, both literally and in the economic sense. They are the major recipients of government assistance when it comes. But in North Carolina and elsewhere, workers, farmers, and their families, along with proprietors of small enterprises, bear the brunt of the flooding. Their farms, homes, schools, and jobs are destroyed or jeopardized.

The lost livestock and crops represent the livelihood of working farmers and agricultural laborers. Before the flood farmers were already being driven to the wall, confronting the sharp, worldwide fall in prices for their produce and never-failing demands for payment of interest and loans from the banks. When the rains came, most had zero or limited insurance cover. A government official admitted that many farmers need grants, not loans, no matter how low the interest. But loans are precisely the form that most government assistance takes.

The national oppression that capitalism breeds and institutionalizes come to the fore in such a crisis as well. As one farmer who is Black told a *Militant* reporter, in past floods and droughts the authorities "always said they had run out of funds when I got there." Black families are

Boris Yeltsin has to rely more and more on centralized executive power to hold together the warring factions of the dominant stratum and balance it against an increasingly restive working class, as living standards keep plummeting.

To bolster its position, the Russian government has whipped up anti-Islamic chauvinism — carrying out anti-immigrant raids in Moscow and raining terror on the civilian population of Grozny and other parts of Chechnya. Russian officials grotesquely justify their assault by comparing it to the barbaric U.S.-NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. Their reactionary actions will only embolden ultrarightists like Russian fascist Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

National conflicts of all kinds will continue to explode throughout Russia and the central Asian workers states. They are an inevitable product of the Stalinist counter-revolution in the Soviet Union more than seven decades ago, which brutally reversed the internationalist course of the Bolshevik Party under V.I. Lenin's leadership. In the early years of the Russian revolution, the workers and farmers government there moved to restore to the majority-Muslim peoples of northern Caucasus the lands that had been stolen from them by czarist rulers.

In the first Caucasus war of 1994-96, Moscow unleashed a bloody onslaught but failed to crush the Chechen independence struggle, having to withdraw its humiliated army. The Chechen people won respect from working-class fighters everywhere for their heroic resistance to the Great Russian chauvinists. Today the Kremlin is in an even weaker position to stifle this struggle.

Working people around the world should demand that Moscow immediately withdraw its troops and stop its war on Chechnya and other peoples of the Caucasus.

often forced to live in lower-cost and lower-lying areas, more exposed to flooding.

Some immigrant workers from Mexico and Central America, often living in camps without telephones or means of transport, report being turned down for emergency food stamps on the illegitimate grounds that they lack Social Security cards. Meanwhile, the heavy rains from Floyd are taking their toll in Central America, creating tens of thousands of homeless people in Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

The revolutionary government of Cuba immediately sent a team of 32 volunteer doctors to Honduras, an action consistent with its internationalist stance and its responses to previous disasters. What a stark contrast to the actions of the U.S. government to toilers hit by the disaster, both in the United States and internationally.

Workers and working farmers must stand together to demand immediate and massive cash relief for those affected by the flood. We should also demand:

- Stop all farm foreclosures — not one working farmer should lose one acre of land.
- Cancel the third world debt and provide massive aid to the countries of Central America afflicted by the flooding.

Ethel Lobman: 55-year cadre of SWP

Continued from Page 6

onstrations in 1974, when Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, collaborated with city school officials to engineer the removal of Luis Fuentes from his post as community superintendent of schools, dismissed 14 principals and supervisors supported by parents — a big percentage of whom were Black, Puerto Rican, and Chinese — and begun dismantling bilingual and Black studies programs and slashing the school budget.

The story of that fight is told in the pamphlet *The Struggle for Community Control in N.Y. School District 1: Puerto Rican, Black and Chinese Parents Fight Racism* by Ethel Lobman and Katherine Sojourner, which was published by Pathfinder in 1975.

"The experience in this important struggle will lead some of the militants to see that the roots of the race-prejudiced and class-prejudiced school system lies in the system of capitalism," Lobman wrote in that pamphlet. Several of those militants did join the SWP during that fight.

At the end of the 1970s, Lobman took a job as a librarian at the Tamiment Labor Library. She retired from there in 1986, but continued working one day a week until shortly before she was diagnosed with cancer in November 1998.

Communist activity to end of her life

Lobman remained active as a communist until the end of her life. For more than a decade until the fall of last year, she organized volunteers who came at the Pathfinder Building twice a week or more to enter new subscribers for the

Militant and its sister publication in Spanish *Perspectiva Mundial* in the computer, and maintained that list. She was known for, and tried to imbue in others, her meticulous attention to detail and professionalism necessary to guarantee that those who wanted the revolutionary press would get it regularly. She was often on the phone to subscribers to work out problems.

During this period, she also maintained accounts with several newsstands that carried the *Militant* in New York and did the footwork to deliver the papers and collect sales money.

Other recent activities include participation in protests against Washington's brutal bombings of Iraq, shown in the photo on page 3. In the first half of 1998, before she became ill, she did a weekly plant gate sale at JFK airport, to reach machinists at United and other airlines, as part of the party effort to reach out to industrial workers, increasingly resisting belt-tightening measures by the employers, with the *Militant*, the Marxist magazine *New International*, and Pathfinder books.

The meeting to celebrate Lobman's life and political contributions will be held at the Dag Hammarskjöld Lounge, Sixth Floor, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University in Manhattan, on Sunday, October 10, beginning at 1 p.m. A fund appeal at the gathering will raise money for the Pathfinder Fund. Messages for the meeting or the family can be mailed to the New York SWP headquarters at 59 Fourth Ave., Brooklyn, New York 11217; sent by fax to (718) 399-3492, or by e-mail to 102064.2642@compuserve.com.

Yeltsin launches bombing assault against Chechnya

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Vowing to take the "harshest measures" against independence fighters in the Caucasus, the regime of Russian president Boris Yeltsin has escalated its assault on Chechnya and other Muslim peoples in the region. Russian warplanes bombed Chechnya September 29 for the eighth day straight, while Internal Affairs Minister Vladimir Rushaylo announced further arrests in a nationwide "antiterror" operation.

U.S. ruling-class figures are lending tacit support to this crackdown by the Kremlin, as they have in the past, even as they express nervousness about the instability that threatens to engulf the entire region.

The Yeltsin regime has been conducting air strikes against the Chechen population, ostensibly to crush guerrilla forces they claim organized raids into neighboring Dagestan, to the east of Chechnya. Russian forces have pounded villages in Dagestan as well. Rebel soldiers fighting for the independence of Dagestan captured six villages there and killed 14 Russian troops in the first weeks of September. Since fighting broke out in August, at least 230 Russian soldiers have been killed and 875 wounded.

Russian forces bombard Chechnya

In recent days 60,000 Chechens have fled into the Russian republic of Ingushetia, which borders Chechnya to the west, to escape the bombardment. Chechen officials reported 384 people have been killed and more than 1,000 wounded.

"From the first day of the bombing, carried out under the pretext of attacking terrorists, villages and settlements have been hit by air strikes," said Chechen deputy prime minister Kazbek Makhachev. "In one district, the bombs hit a school and eight people were killed."

The Yeltsin regime announced September 22 it would seal Chechnya's border with Dagestan, and rapidly amassed 30,000 troops along with tanks and other heavy equipment in the area. Russian officials deny a ground invasion is imminent, but say they will press ahead relentlessly with the air raids.

Russian warplanes have bombed and fired rockets on Chechnya's oil refineries, communications systems, industrial facilities, a television station, and the airport in Grozny. The Kremlin is asserting "certain parallels" between its assault on Chechnya and the U.S.-NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia earlier this year. Moscow boasts about "high-precision bombs" while hitting civilian areas. The Russian air force is flying up to 60 bombing missions a day.

At the same time, Moscow has ignored the Chechen government's call for negotiations to halt bombing. Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov's request for an urgent meeting with Yeltsin was dismissed. "We have more than once showed the readiness for political dialogue," said Makhachev.

Chechnya's infrastructure suffered major damage from bombing during 1994-96, when the Yeltsin regime dispatched an invasion force of 30,000 Russian troops to crush the independence movement there. An estimated 80,000 people died in the war. In the years since the Chechen fighters defeated and humiliated the Russian military, the republic has governed its own affairs. But Moscow refuses to recognize Chechnya's independence.

Anti-Islamic campaign

To justify their military onslaught, Russian government officials are attempting to blame "Islamic militants" for the series of explosions in Moscow that killed more than 300 people, although no one claimed responsibility for the blasts. "The main threat is coming from Chechnya" asserted Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov, as he announced a crackdown on Chechens and other Muslim immigrants from the Caucasus region. Cops began conducting sweeping search operations September 14 in people's homes, at Moscow's airports, railway stations, and markets. The Russian interior minister announced September 17 that 11,000 people had been detained for questioning.

Recently the Yeltsin regime stepped up its anti-Muslim campaign, claiming the rebel fighters are linked with "international terrorism" and Saudi businessman Osama bin Laden. Last year Washington accused bin Laden of being the mastermind behind the Aug. 7, 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Two weeks later U.S. warships deployed in the Red Sea and Arabian Sea fired 79 cruise missiles on Afghanistan and Sudan.

The White House claimed these bombings were launched in "self-defense" against an "international terrorist network" organized by bin Laden. Earlier this year the *New York Times* admitted that "no known evidence implicates" bin Laden in the embassy bombings.

The Clinton administration in the past has backed Moscow's military actions in the Caucasus, but expressed concern about mounting outrage among workers and peasants. "Any resumption of general hostilities," said White House spokesman Joseph Lockhart, "would be a threat to the stability of the region."

"If the [Russian] military could really pinpoint terrorist nests, the editors of the *New York Times* opined, "this bombing could really be worth the effort."

Meanwhile, Moscow's anti-Islamic crusade and the attempt to suppress independence struggles in the Caucasus have only exacerbated tensions in the region from Georgia and Armenia to Kyrgyzstan.

London strikers stay strong in battle for union rights

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your

off of £220 (£1 = US\$1.50) for every year worked.

"We want everyone with their jobs back, money is not the main issue," said Gurdip Singh, another strike leader. The company had hoped to "divide us, but our unity is still there," he added.

That view was confirmed by Surrinder, who stated, "If we stick together we can push them down." In addition to sustaining the picket

ON THE PICKET LINE

workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

LONDON, England — More than 200 Lufthansa Skycheffs strikers poured out of a mass meeting here on September 9 determined to keep their now 10-month-long fight for union rights and jobs going.

"Our strike is very important to tell the management that they can't treat people like slaves," said Surrinder, one of the strikers who has been in the forefront of maintaining the 24-hour, seven-days-a-week picket line at the Heathrow base of Lufthansa Skycheffs. Their fight goes back to Nov. 20, 1998, when Lufthansa Skycheffs, which supplies catering to airlines, sacked 270 of the workers for organizing a one-day strike for a wage increase in the face of productivity moves.

The September 9 meeting rejected a company offer made after several weeks of talks with union negotiators. Strike leader Javed Upadaya said, "Our demand was for reinstatement, they offered us the right to apply for vacancies. We rejected that and will fight on for reinstatement." Days later *Skyport*, a newspaper widely circulated at Heathrow airport, revealed that in fact there were only 30 vacancies available anyway. For strikers who did not want the option of applying for vacancies the company offered a pay

at the Heathrow plant, workers have mobilized daily to picket Lufthansa's travel showroom in central London as part of a campaign calling for a boycott of the company. On September 13, some 120 strikers mobilized for a public meeting in support of their struggle organized by their union, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), and held the event adjacent to the Trades Union Congress (TUC) annual conference in Brighton.

Speakers included TGWU leader Bill Morris and TUC leader John Monks. "Our dispute was the last thing Lufthansa wanted. They thought we wouldn't stand up for our rights. We've proved them wrong," Upadaya told the 200 people there. "After 10 months we are still here, still strong and fighting on. We can not afford to lose, nor can the trade union movement."

Steelworkers strike in Pennsylvania

PALMERTON, Pennsylvania — "I don't think the company ever thought we'd strike again. I didn't! This strike has taken the union by surprise and even the workers by surprise!" That's what Kenneth Clotz, a member of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 3317 here told *Militant* reporters September 20. Clotz is on strike against Horsehead Resource Development Company and Zinc



Skycheffs workers at strike rally outside Trades Union Congress conference, in Brighton, England, September 13 — one of many protests they have organized.

Militant/Pete Clifford

Corporation of America, along with another 170 workers who walked out after rejecting the company offer of a \$0.15 raise the first and second year of the contract and a \$0.25 raise the third, after nine years of frozen wages. Also at issue were seniority and recall rights of laid-off workers. The plant processes hazardous waste for resale.

The last strike at the plant was in 1984, which ended with the union going back with a contract worse than the one they struck over — without any raise at all — several strikers said. This came about after many workers crossed the picket line. Following that setback, the company froze wages for nine years, and made a round of layoffs in 1996.

When a strike vote was announced, it took many workers by surprise because there had been little discussion about it prior to the ballot. Local 3317 now has 24-hour pickets, with a picket-duty roster in the union hall informing members about their turn. The pickets have gotten a good response from the community. Many strikers noted the huge difference in support compared to the 1984 walkout. Many car and truck drivers passing by honk in solidarity. The union has sent representatives to explain to other locals the details of the strike and the importance of not crossing the picket line. The factory is now being run mostly by management. Some of the manag-

ers are from another plant in Ohio.

"Right now, the companies rule, but you have to fight for what you can," Clotz said. "You can beat them, you just have to stick together and try — or else you don't get a raise in another nine years!" He and other strikers said they disliked the fact that the struggles of working people are, in large part, kept out of the big-business news.

Another contract offer and vote was scheduled for September 22.

Hotel workers demand union in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA — Fifteen housekeepers at the Ramada Inn near the Philadelphia International Airport, joined by 30 supporters, danced, chanted, sang, and marched to show their determination to say, "We are union" in a representation vote September 16.

The rally, held in the hotel's parking lot September 14, was an answer to the hotel management's threats and intimidation.

Besides the usual slanders that workers would be forced out on strike and pay uncontrolled union dues if they unionize, management has held numerous propaganda meetings and has been using faked "customer satisfaction" cards to attempt to discipline the most outspoken union supporters,

hotel expressed their support for the organizing drive and said they would honor a picket line by the housekeepers if it came to that. "It took the union to get them to say we were going to get benefits. If we were going to be treated right without a union we would have by now," Stewart said.

According to organizers for Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union Local 274, 50 out of 55 housekeepers, overwhelmingly women, signed cards requesting the right to vote for union representation.

Tracy Hopkins, one of the most spirited housekeepers, reported that up to 30 people attended meetings to organize to get union representation. They currently have no sick or personal days, no benefits, and the starting wage is \$5.60 per hour.

"When we are sick we can't stay out because we'll be fired, we can't go to the doctor. They don't understand about baby-sitters. They don't want the union because they can do what they want," Hopkins said. "We aren't taking it anymore. They are listening to us now."

Pete Clifford, a member of the Transport and General Workers Union in London; Elena Tate, a member of the Young Socialists in New York; and Connie Allen, a member of United Auto Workers Local 1069 in Philadelphia, contributed to this column.

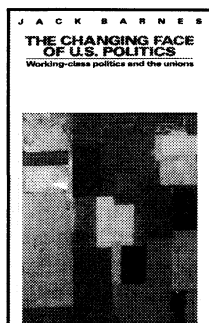
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LETTERS

On the Militant's website

The new web site is an advance. Please list the back page articles, as well as the front page ones. This would be helpful to those who check the website as a sneak preview of what these pages have on them, as well as the articles themselves. Helpful in planning sales. Henry Hillenbrand Cleveland, Ohio

Rock musicians' album

Militant readers may be interested to know that rock musicians Ani DiFranco and Utah Phillips recently released an album of 18 workers' fight songs and stories — ranging from "Joe Hill" to an instrumental rendition of the "Internationale." The album is well worth the purchase. It is available in major music stores or from Righteous Babe Records, P.O. Box 95, Ellicott



Station, Buffalo, NY 14205. Jerry Fanning Crossett, Arkansas

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on sub-

jects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

October 16 march on Washington will defend rights of immigrants

BY TOM HEADLEY

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "Employers are using the undocumented status of some immigrants to abuse and exploit workers and to avoid paying benefits and taxes," said Juan Mazlymian, an organizer for the Laborers' International Union of North America, at a September 23 press conference held in Washington, D.C., at the headquarters of the National Council of La Raza.

The conference was called by the National Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty for Undocumented Immigrants to draw attention to the problems and struggles of undocumented immigrants in the United States and publicize a demonstration in support of immigrant rights planned here for October 16.

The official demands of the demonstration are: 1) respect the human and civil rights of immigrants, indigenous people, and the poor; 2) general amnesty for all undocumented immigrants; 3) stop the Immigration officials from raiding and deporting immigrants; 4) work permits for all; 5) Fair wages for all workers, and 6) stop the attacks on bilingual education.

Participants in the bilingual press conference included representatives from the national coordinating committee of the Coalition, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), the National Council of La Raza, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), the Asociación Tepeyac de New York, the Centro de Trabajadores Latinos, the Laborers' International Union of North America, the Columbian-American Political Action Committee, Latinos Unidos of Rhode Island and of Michigan, *Labor Notes*, the Brown Berets de Aztlan, and Comité Latino Local 79 of New York.

Information about the October 16 demonstration can be obtained by calling (202) 776-1748.

Chávez attacks traditional parties, consolidates his regime in Venezuela

BY BRIANTAYLOR

Relying on deep popular resentment against the parties that dominated Venezuela's political scene for decades, President Hugo Chávez has taken further steps to consolidate his regime. Under the banner of fighting corruption and addressing the social crisis, the Venezuelan president has aimed his first blows at Congress and the courts — moves that have won him wide popularity despite the economic recession that has hit the South American nation.

On August 30 the newly established Constituent Assembly, originally charged with rewriting the constitution, took away the powers of the existing Congress, dominated by the two former ruling parties. Chávez has asked the assembly, made up overwhelmingly of members of his Fifth Republic Movement, to present a draft constitution by the end of October. Earlier in August, the new body also took over the functions of Venezuela's judiciary.

Hugo Chávez's rise to political prominence is the product of the extreme social crisis and turmoil, the discrediting of all the traditional bourgeois institutions, and the lack of working-class leadership that has marked Venezuela over the past two decades.

Chávez: product of social crisis

Chávez is a classic Bonapartist politician — a figure who, in times of sharp crisis, presents himself as the "man of destiny" who can stand above social classes and the muck of traditional politics to rescue the nation and bring social peace, even at the expense of parliamentary democracy. Such figures, who are often tied to sections of the military, especially the elite forces, try to whip up popular consent through occasional plebiscites and referendums. The job of the Bonapartist leader, however, is to stabilize the rule of the dominant social layer — in this case the Venezuelan capitalist class.

Throughout the 1970s Venezuela's economy boomed, driven by revenue from the oil industry, nationalized by the social democratic regime of Carlos Andrés Pérez. Venezuela has the second-largest oil reserves in the world, after the Arab-Persian Gulf region. During that period, urban and rural toilers wrested a number of social benefits from the Pérez government.

At the onset of the worldwide economic depression in the late '80s, oil prices fell drastically and Pérez began a "free market" austerity drive to appease the International Monetary Fund and capitalist investors. The social democratic government slashed social services and cut subsidies on basic necessities, from food to electricity. Gasoline prices vaulted by 80 percent. Unemployment rose to an official level of 30 percent.

These measures sparked antigovernment protests by tens of thousands of people in February 1989. The Pérez administration responded with a bloodbath, deploying cops and troops who slaughtered as many as several thousand people. Protests continued over the next several years. The class-collaborationist leadership of the trade unions, however, was incapable of leading a fight to combat the effects of the social crisis.

In midst of this social turmoil and impasse between the ruling class and working people, Col. Hugo Chávez led other lower-echelon members of the officer corps in a coup against the Pérez government in February 1992. The coup plotters won sympathy but sought and drew no participation from workers or peasants. This coup was put down by a hated and discredited government, and Chávez went to jail a hero.

Less than a year later the social democratic president was impeached on corruption charges and removed. The ruling class recycled a former president, Rafael Caldera, who ran on a demagogic "anticorruption" and "independent" platform. Soon after his inauguration, however, Caldera declared an "economic

emergency," suspended the constitution, and cracked down on working people.

Chávez, released from prison in 1994, became a pole of attraction to broad layers of the middle class and working people. Presenting himself as "the voice of the dispossessed," he railed against the social democratic Democratic Action and the Social Christian COPEI



Under the banner of fighting corruption and addressing the social crisis, Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez has attacked Congress and the courts, winning wide popularity. The job of such Bonapartist leaders, however, is to stabilize the rule of the dominant social layer. Above, hundreds of Chávez supporters rally outside Congress September 2. One sign reads, "Corrupt judges out of Carabobo [state]." Another declares, "Labor emergency," a call pushed by the regime for the government to intervene in the trade unions in the name of "union democracy."

parties — the two capitalist parties that for 40 years have alternated rule over Venezuela's 24 million inhabitants — for their rampant misuse of the national wealth and governmental powers. In last year's presidential elections he won a resounding 57 percent of the vote, while the other parties shattered at the polls.

In his election campaign Chávez pushed for a referendum to elect a body that could rewrite and democratize the nation's constitution. The National Constituent Assembly was elected in July. Ninety-five percent of the assembly delegates are members of the Patriotic Pole, Chávez's electoral supporters.

Wins support for attacks on Congress

On August 23 the Assembly decreed a "legislative emergency," nullifying the powers of Congress and suspending all of its "ordinary and special sessions." A week earlier, it carried out a similar move against the Supreme Court by declaring a "judiciary emergency."

"Here in Venezuela, political cliques of old — political cliques that are disappearing, thank God — emerged and became embedded in the system and manipulated all levels of power. Very small groups of Venezuelans controlled the executive, legislative and judicial branches," Chávez stated in an August 27 speech, justifying the moves against the legislature and courts.

Manuel Quijada, a lawyer whom the assembly put in charge of a special commission to purge the courts, warned, "The objective is that the substitution of judges take place peacefully, but if the courts refuse to acknowledge the assembly's authority, we will proceed in a different fashion."

These moves threw former government officials and supporters of the two opposition parties into a tizzy. Supreme Court chief justice Cecilia Sosa resigned in protest the day after the court ratified the Constituent Assembly's assumption of its powers. So far at least 22 judges have been fired by the assembly, with more than 3,000 awaiting investigation on corruption charges.

A few days later legislators from both traditional parties, chanting "Democracy yes,

dictatorship no," tried to break into the locked parliament building and reconvene the body in defiance of the Constituent Assembly. They clashed with Chávez supporters blocking their way.

The Chávez government deployed the National Guard against the protesters, some of whom were reportedly carrying sticks. The

help in public works such as repairing some roads. Some 4,000 schools, hospitals, medical centers, and shelters have been repaired. Two million children have been vaccinated against polio, and school enrollment has increased by 25 percent.

Courting the support of impoverished middle-class layers, the president announced the establishment of a state-owned People's Bank, which is supposed to make loans ranging from \$160 to \$8,000 for periods of up to a year.

Chávez does a two-hour radio talk show every Sunday called "Hello President." People call in seeking solutions to their individual problems, which Chávez says he will respond to. One 72-year-old retired bus driver, Pedro Marrero, called in recently to explain that his monthly \$150 pension was not enough to live on. Chávez responded, "We have to do away with this," declaring it unfair that, in contrast, some top executives of the state oil company retire with \$25,000 a month.

A number of calls like this are taken, and then "follow-up dossiers" for each complaint are reportedly drawn up. "We're going to check it out," the president tells callers.

One target of the government has been the discredited officialdom of the Venezuelan Workers Confederation (CTV), which is closely tied to the main bourgeois parties.

Pro-Chávez forces have set up a new labor formation, the Workers Constituent Front, to undercut the CTV. Leaders of the front have asked the Constituent Assembly to dissolve the CTV under the cover of a referendum by workers. The Chávez leadership's attacks on the established union officialdom for corruption, even in the guise of a referendum, are a serious threat to any efforts by the ranks of the labor movement to organize independently of the regime.

'Not socialism or savage capitalism'

Both Chávez and his fellow Bonapartist ruler, President Alberto Fujimori of Peru, have won popular support by posing as outsiders taking on the corrupt establishment and cutting through the bureaucracy to bring stability. Both, for example, have attacked Congress and the courts. But while Fujimori, in waging an "antiterrorist" campaign against antigovernment guerrillas and launching harsh austerity measures, has taken a more openly rightist stance, Chávez has so far sought to present a more "left" image.

The Venezuelan president has co-opted leaders of leftist organizations into his government, and has publicly cultivated his personal contacts with Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro.

Chávez told a United Nations audience during a recent trip to New York, "Neither the economic model of state socialism... nor the other model of individualistic capitalism and the model of savage capitalism is what we see as the model."

At the same time, the regime, like other capitalist governments throughout Latin America, is seeking to open up the country to further penetration by foreign capitalists. Santander Investment vice president Ricardo Penfold noted that Chávez has proven orthodox on economic policy. Before the elections, he said, "People were talking about exchange controls, price controls, and huge salary increases" for workers. None of this came about, he noted. "Chávez on the fiscal side has been pretty responsible."

Washington and other imperialist governments, despite their discomfort with his seeming unpredictability, has so far viewed Chávez as someone they can work with. On September 23, the Venezuelan leader returned from a trip to New York and Washington designed to reassure U.S. government officials and businessmen. "We feel more confident about him now," said Buddy MacKay, the White House special envoy to the Americas.